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ARTISTIC JAPAN.

ARTISTIC JAPAN:

A Monthly Illustrated Journal

OF

ARTS AND INDUSTRIES

COMPILED BY

S. BING

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF

MM. PH. BURTY, EDMOND DE GONCOURT, LOUIS GONSE, T. HAYASHI, ANTONIN PROUST, ARY RENAN, ETC., IN PARIS.

PROFESSOR ROBERTS-AUSTEN, MR. WM. ANDERSON, MR. ERNEST HART, MR. CH. READ, IN LONDON.

DIR. DR. JUSTUS BRINCKMANN, DIR. PROFESSOR CARL GRAFF, DR. GEORG HIRTH, DIR. PROFESSOR DR. JULIUS LESSING, DIR. ARTHUR PABST, IN GERMANY.

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Contents of Number 1.

INTRODUCTION, by S. BING.

The illustrations in the text are with few exceptions taken from the works of Katsushika Hokusai, a painter and illustrator of books; he belonged to what is known as the Popular School, and was born in 1760.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SEPARATELY PRINTED PLATES.

A. **View of Lake Biwa.**—This is one of the eight celebrated views on this lake. The reproduction is from a coloured engraving by Hiro-shigé, a landscape painter of the Popular School, born in 1795.

C. **Study of Grasses.**—Facsimile of a pencil drawing. The inscription to the right states: "Copied from nature the 4th day of the 8th month, in the 2nd year of Kokwa (1845)." The other inscriptions give indications as to the size and colour of the different parts of the plant.

H. **Decorative Matter,** from a stencil design (nineteenth century).

E. **Study of a Dead Bird.**—Facsimile of a sketch dating from the end of the eighteenth century, representing the *Ikaru* (Euphora personata), a native of China and Japan.

G. **Decorative Idea,** by an artisan of the nineteenth century, composed of bands of fern leaves on variously designed grounds.

B. **Specimen of Brocade (silk)** of the sixteenth century, the design wisteria flowers. From the original.

I. **Flower-vases:** bronze, dark patina, eighteenth century.

D. **Group of Monkeys.**—Reproduction from a kakemono painted in water-colours by Mori Sosen, a celebrated animal painter of the Shijo School, born 1747. The design on the border of the kakemono is taken from the flowers of the Clematis.

A.-J. **Ornamental Designs** after stencil patterns:—

1. Gourds interspersed between hexagonal ornaments taken from the scales of a tortoise.

2. A medley of chrysanthemums and paulonias, these being the flowers which form the Imperial badges or crests. The flowers are treated both singly and in groups. The use of these flowers was forbidden except to members of the Imperial family.

3. Design of bamboo branches. This plant is used by the Japanese for almost every article of daily use, and its graceful and elegant forms afford perpetually recurring motives for the use of artists.

F. **Mask of a No Dancer.**—These dances are of very early origin, and are connected with religious and Court ceremonies. The masks are usually of carved wood lacquered, and the finest specimens are of considerable age.

The text of the Second Number will be written by M. Louis Gonse.

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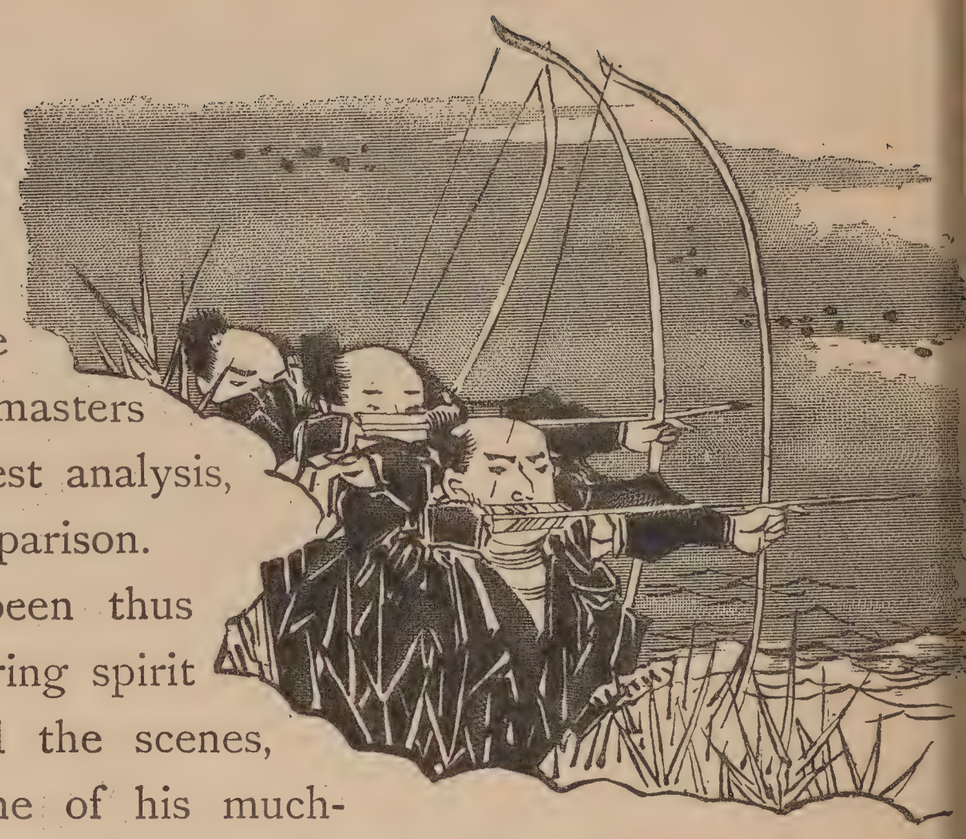
PROGRAMME

In presenting to the public ARTISTIC JAPAN, I lay no claim to the addition of a fresh chapter to the many works upon the history of Japanese Art already in existence. Its aim is not that of a guide

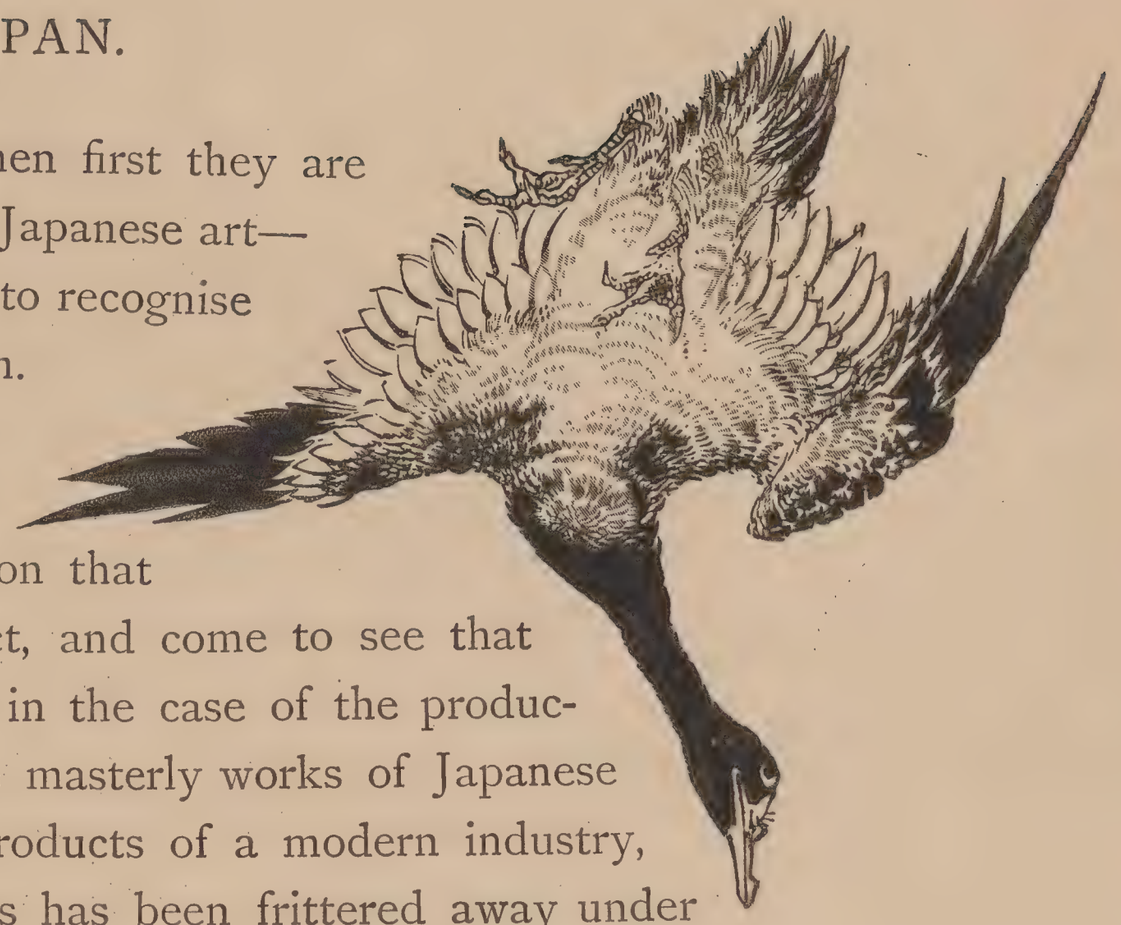


to unexplored regions, or the examination of recondite theories. These have already been treated of by masters of æsthetics, who have subjected them to the keenest analysis, to the most careful verification, classification, and comparison.

But the section of the public which has been thus catered for is a comparatively small one; the inquiring spirit who is never satisfied unless he is admitted behind the scenes, and receives certificates of authenticity for every one of his much-prized objects as he acquires them, is only to be met with now and then. These have had, as I have already said, their requirements met. To them this publication is addressed, but not in the first instance. It is primarily intended for the instruction of the general public in the real and rare beauties of an Art which has hitherto attracted chiefly through its superficial qualities. How, indeed, could this be otherwise? In almost every country in Europe (England perhaps excepted) the great State collections, in which marvels of all styles, all epochs, and all lands are included, have disdainfully closed their doors to Japanese Art. In the shop and the bazaar only has Japanese Art been represented, and there merely in its least refined and elevated form.

There its productions, in picturesque disorder, have appealed to the undiscriminating glance of the passer-by, who, indeed, could not help being fascinated by the undeniable charm of nicknacks made only for exportation, but who did not consider that what he saw was no more than the vague reflection of an art which was formerly vigorous and sound. He could not know that the sculptured groups whose effeminate forms he admired had some masterpiece of life and expression for their prototype; he has not been told that yonder garish vase is but a feeble imitation of a piece of pottery marvellous in colour and technical perfection. It is not surprising that he admired a sample of tissue woven in the period of decadence, for he has never seen any of those sumptuous stuffs which the artist in embroidery of the feudal times covered with harmonious tints in a style of lordly grandeur. Even the artist, when he stopped to admire the drawings and engravings sketched with the cleverness of the race by some draftsman of modern Japan, knew naught of the wonderful albums in which the genius of the famous masters of the bygone time was matched by that of the engravers who interpreted and multiplied their works.

ARTISTIC JAPAN.



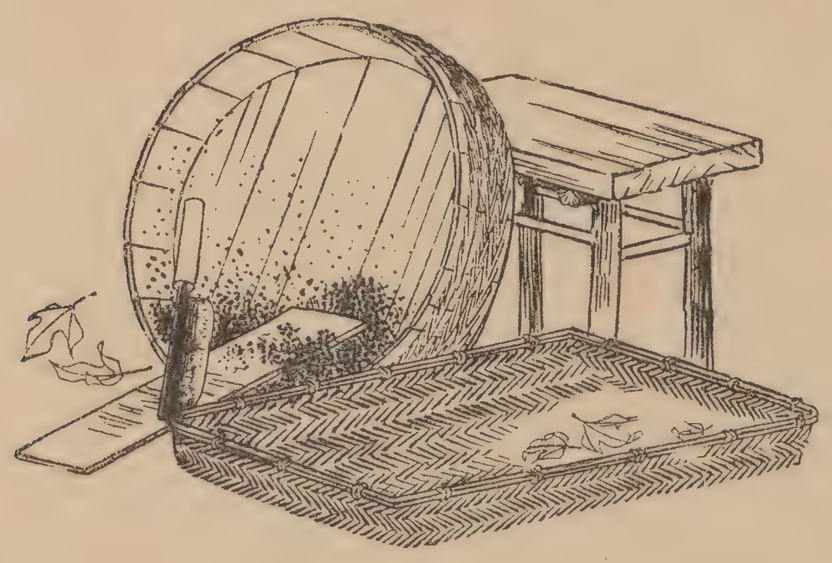
It is in the power of but very few, when first they are privileged to see side by side two phases of Japanese art—one in its prime, the other in its decadence—to recognise at a glance the vast distance that divides them. It is by degrees only that the eye can distinguish between them. It is only as we begin to examine them with closer attention that we arrive at some knowledge of the subject, and come to see that precisely the same distinction which there is in the case of the productions of our own country, exists between the masterly works of Japanese art which were creations, and the current products of a modern industry, in which the mighty genius of ancestral artists has been frittered away under the mercantile influence of a later epoch.

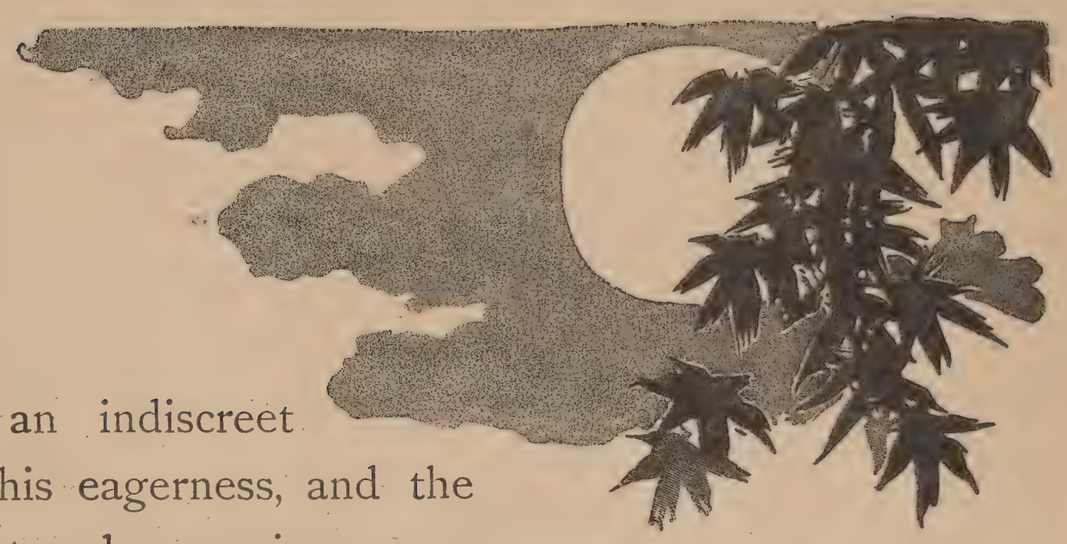
This truth was, however, immediately recognised by that limited number of connoisseurs who in every age devote themselves to the study of the beautiful, and it came with especial force to the few well-informed collectors who were so fortunate as to meet at the onset with specimens of a superior order. Unfortunately, such specimens are rare, and are becoming more so every day, and it is within the means of but few to acquire them. To the great majority therefore the only way of instructing them as to what is really choice in Japanese Art is by placing before them faithful reproductions of the original objects. This is the task to which I am about to devote myself. I propose to furnish the lovers of Japanese Art, by the aid of the best processes of engraving, with a continuous series of diversified specimens, taken from every branch of that art, at all its various epochs. The work will constitute a sort of graphic encyclopædia, for the use of all those students of Japanese Art who are desirous of tracing the course of its development.

The present publication has yet another object. It is especially addressed to those persons who, on any grounds, are interested in the future of the industrial arts, and especially to those who, whether as manufacturers or as artizans, have an active share in their production. In the new forms of art which have come to us from the uttermost parts of the East, we see something more than a Platonic feast set before our

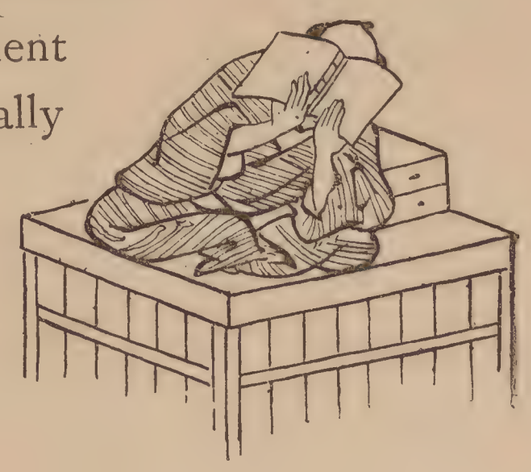
contemplative dilettanti, we find in them examples worthy to be followed in every respect, not, indeed, worthy to uproot the foundations of the old æsthetic edifice which exists, but fitted to add a fresh force to those forces which we have appropriated to ourselves in all past time, and brought to the support and aid of our national genius. How could the vitality of that genius have been maintained had it not been recruited from fresh sources from time to time? Where is the civilized country, ancient or modern, from which we have not at some time borrowed some of its artistic culture? Long since, alas! we exhausted the patrimony of the ancients, and from the confines of central Asia, the cradle of our race, even to our own seaboard, nothing has been created for three thousand years that we have not turned to our own uses in the endless evolution, that we have not made a law to ourselves. And at last of any novel addition there appeared to be no chance, when all at once, from behind the barriers which a small insular people had erected around themselves with jealous care, a fresh form of art, quite startling in its novelty, revealed itself.

It was not therefore surprising that our artists and manufacturers availed themselves eagerly of the discovery. Unfortunately, their precipitation was so headlong that it threatened to be fatal to the cause which it was intended to serve. Defective information concerning the new art led to the use of all the scraps, good or bad, that came by chance into their hands, and a still graver





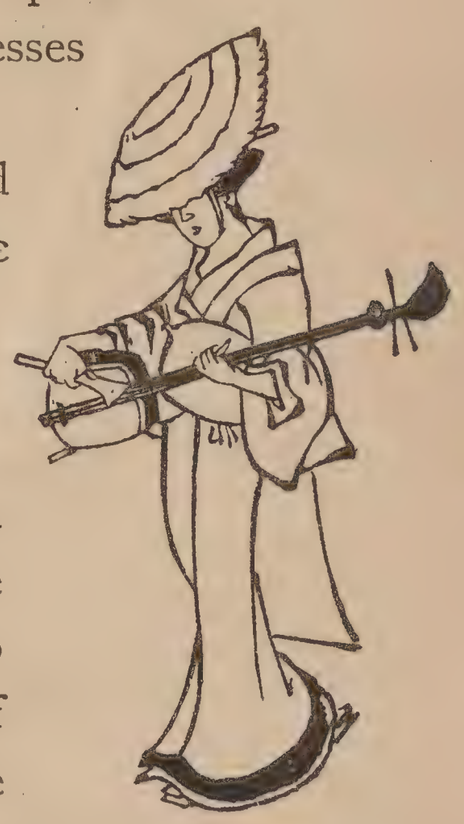
mistake arose from an immoderate as well as an indiscreet application of them. Time has now toned down this eagerness, and the opportune moment for beginning again, with matured experience, on another plan, seems to have arrived. Within the last few years extensive and successful research has brought the finest models of Japanese industry to western countries, and henceforth choice may be made from amongst them of specimens not only racy of the soil, but possessed of that eclectic beauty which is of no country. Especial care therefore ought now to be given to the selection of subjects which lend themselves readily to the requirements and customs of our western culture, with scrupulous avoidance of all those which would encourage mere trick, or degrading imitation. Such are the tendencies which will prevail in the choice of the specimens which will compose the collection of which a first instalment is now offered to the public, and which will gradually accumulate in the series that we shall continuously offer in this periodical. By them we hope that we shall be enabled to estimate the marvellous fertility of that Japanese imagination which has formed an endless variety of brilliant designs, all bearing the stamp of the purest and most ingenious taste.



Our producers will not we trust allow such valuable resources to remain unutilised, for there is not one among technical designers, book illustrators, architects, decorators, manufacturers of papers, printers, weavers, potters, bronze-workers, or goldsmiths, and even the workers in the numberless small industries, who may not derive benefit from consulting a collection which will form a repertory of centuries of Japanese fine art.

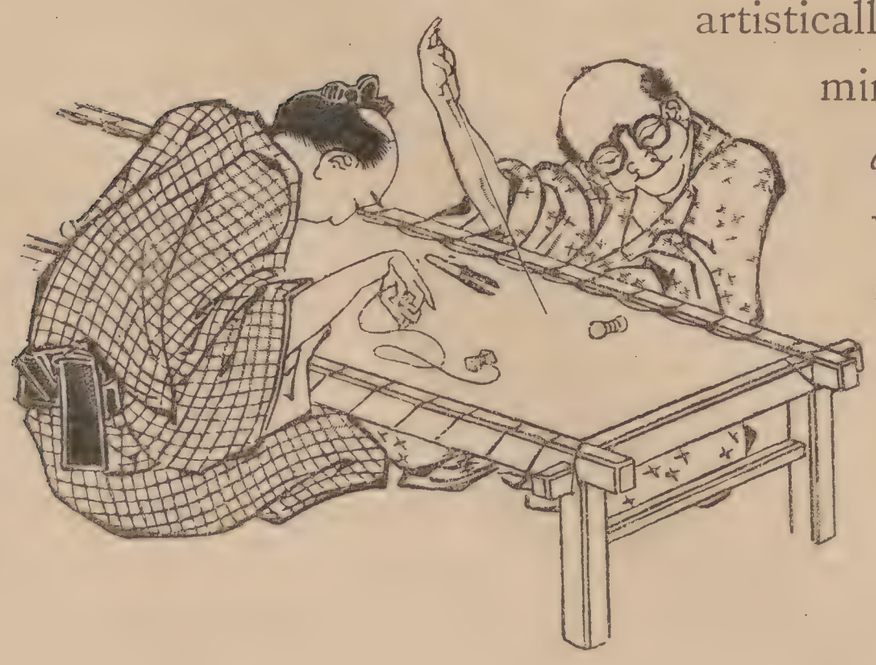
It will not suffice, however, merely to borrow the designs of these models; they must be thoroughly analysed and studied, with a view to arriving at their original conception. This they will be found to be well worthy of, for undoubtedly to discerning minds their aspect will suggest extremely serious reflections upon the fundamental principles of Japanese ornament as compared with the traditions of our own schools. For whilst strict limits have been placed, by the rigorous laws which we call our "styles," to the bounds within which our imagination has been permitted to wander, and whilst our industrial arts have in consequence assumed

a stiff and conventional character destructive to the boldness of originality, Japan appears to have indulged in freedom from and laxity of rules and method. Not that the Japanese artist emancipates himself from all rule, or ever lets his fancy wander at haphazard. Far from this; the constant guide whose indications he follows is called "Nature"; she is his sole, his revered teacher, and her precepts form the inexhaustible source of his inspiration. To Nature he surrenders himself with a frank fervour which expresses itself in all his works, and invests them with touching sincerity.



The Japanese is drawn towards this pure ideal by a twofold characteristic of his temperament. He is at once an enthusiastic poet, moved by the spectacles of Nature, and an attentive and minute observer of the intricate mysteries which lurk in the infinitely little. It is in the spider's web that he loves to study geometry; the marks of a bird's claw upon the snow furnish him with a design for ornamentation; and when he wants to depict the curves of a sinuous line he will certainly resort for inspiration to the capricious ripples which the breeze draws upon the surface of the waters. In a word, he is convinced that Nature contains the primordial elements of all things, and, according to him, nothing exists in creation, be it only a blade of grass, that is not worthy of a place in the loftiest conceptions of Art. This, if I do not err, is the great and salutary lesson that we may derive from the examples which he sets before us. Under such influences the lifeless stiffness to which our technical designers have hitherto so rigidly adhered will be relaxed by degrees, and our productions will become animated by the breath of real life that constitutes the secret charm of every achievement of Japanese Art.

In thus endeavouring to secure a welcome for this work, I have as yet addressed myself only to the enthusiasts who have a special devotion to Japanese Art, and to the larger class to whom it may be of practical use; but I have still to solicit the goodwill of that more general public, who, without any set purpose, may take pleasure in looking over a publication, which, although its purpose be a special one, is recommended by a tasteful array of artistically-executed illustrations. We shall not be unmindful even of the interests of this branch of our *clientèle*. Sketches from Nature will alternate with completed drawings by great masters; landscapes, studies of birds and flowers, scenes from the



life of the people, and even the strange typical masks used in the native plays, will, we believe, as they appear, interest and amuse.

I cannot bring my too lengthy preamble to a close without mention of an apprehension which made me hesitate to undertake this task. I allude to the fear that I might not be able to obtain satisfactory results in the reproduction of the subjects. All doubt on this point has been happily dispelled. I have had the good fortune to obtain the assistance of M. Charles Gillot, whose zeal and skill have been seconded by his fervent love of Japan and its Art. M. Gillot has succeeded to perfection in his engravings, and in the printing of them, and he has thereby proved that mechanical means cease to be the irreconcilable foes of Art, when they are employed by one who can turn them into docile auxiliaries, as supple as the artist's own fingers working under the direct inspiration of his brain.

S. BING.

May, 1888.

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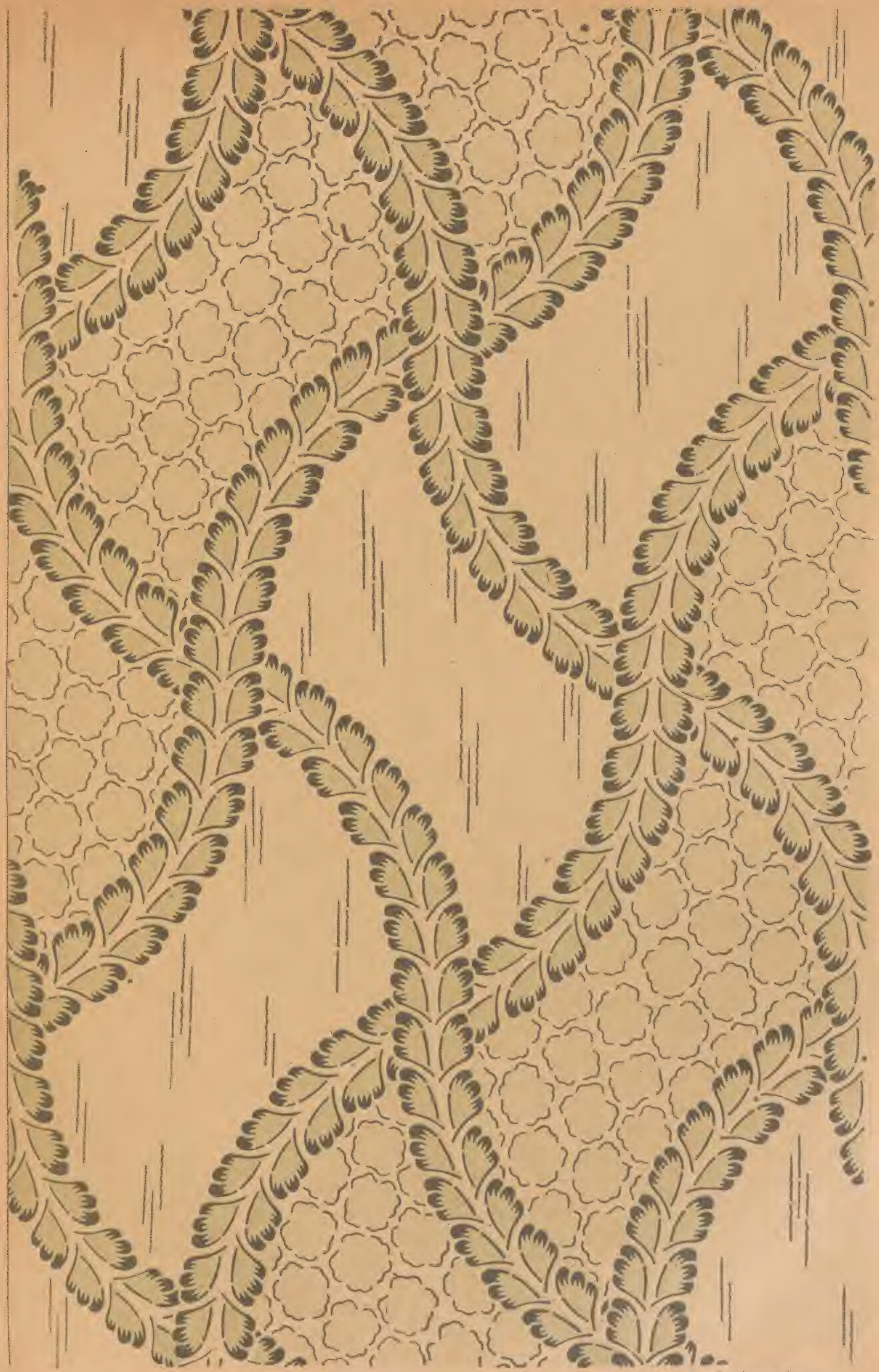

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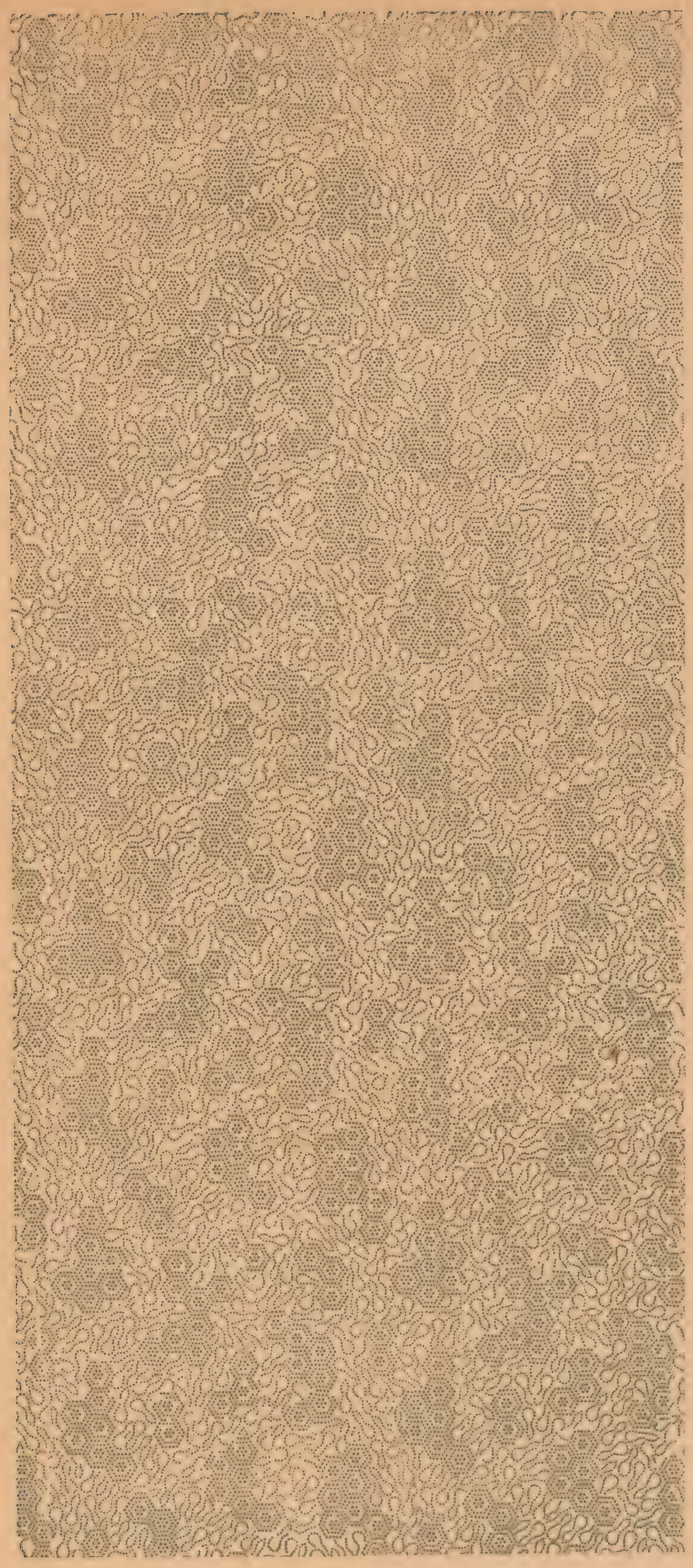

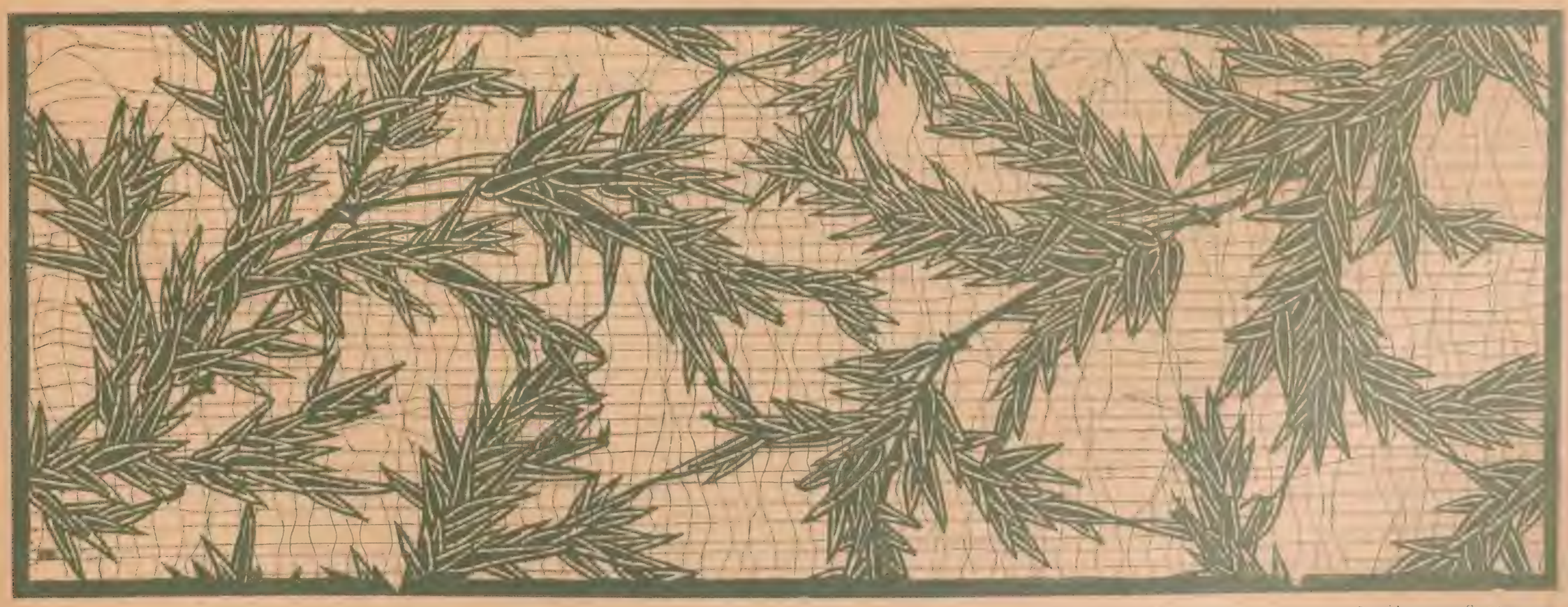

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DESCRIPTION OF THE SEPARATELY PRINTED PLATES.

E.-G. **Fragment of Girdle,** in satin, figured with cut velvet, and spangled. Pattern of butterflies and branches of mallow.

The mallow leaf has been adopted as a crest by the family of Tokugawa, a dynasty of the Shoguns, which ruled Japan from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.

G.-C. **Two Designs,** taken from the *Gwashiki*, a set of three volumes by Hokusai signed "Taïto," one of the numerous signatures used by Hokusai :—

1. Crabs and seaweed.
2. Persons caught in a shower.

E.-E. **Four Sword Guards :—**

1. Hammered iron, pierced and encrusted with gold. Hō bird conventionalized.

2. Hammered iron, pierced and engraved. Foliage and branches of the sacred bamboo (*mandina domestica*), frequently planted in front of temples.

3. Hammered iron, pierced. The decoration of this guard represents berries and leaves, the leaves, groups of berries, and the stalks of berries being in each case five in number.

4. Hammered iron, pierced and mounted with gold. Wild geese alighting in the rushes by the bank of a river during a shower.

F.-D. **Decorative Design,** formed by branches of chrysanthemums alternating with hexagonal ornaments ; from a stencilled pattern for a fabric. Sixteenth century.

A.-A. **An Altar in Carved Wood,** gilded and lacquered. Height, 3 feet 1 inch ; width, 5 feet. Formed of two dragons standing on a pedestal, looking towards each other in a bold curve.

DOUBLE PLATE, representing a **Portrait of Usukumo,** a celebrated beauty of Yedo in the early part of the seventeenth century.

Reproduction of a kakémono (*vide* definition of kakemono, p. 13), by Kaigetsudo, pupil of Moronobu, who painted about the time of Kioko, 1716–1735.

D.-H. **Decorative Design,** formed of branches of prunus tree in flower, alternating with bands decorated with a fret pattern, after a design of the eighteenth century.

G.-D. **A Study of Pinks,** taken from an album of flowers by Bumpo ; date, 1800.

G.-G. **Landscape,** with misty effect.

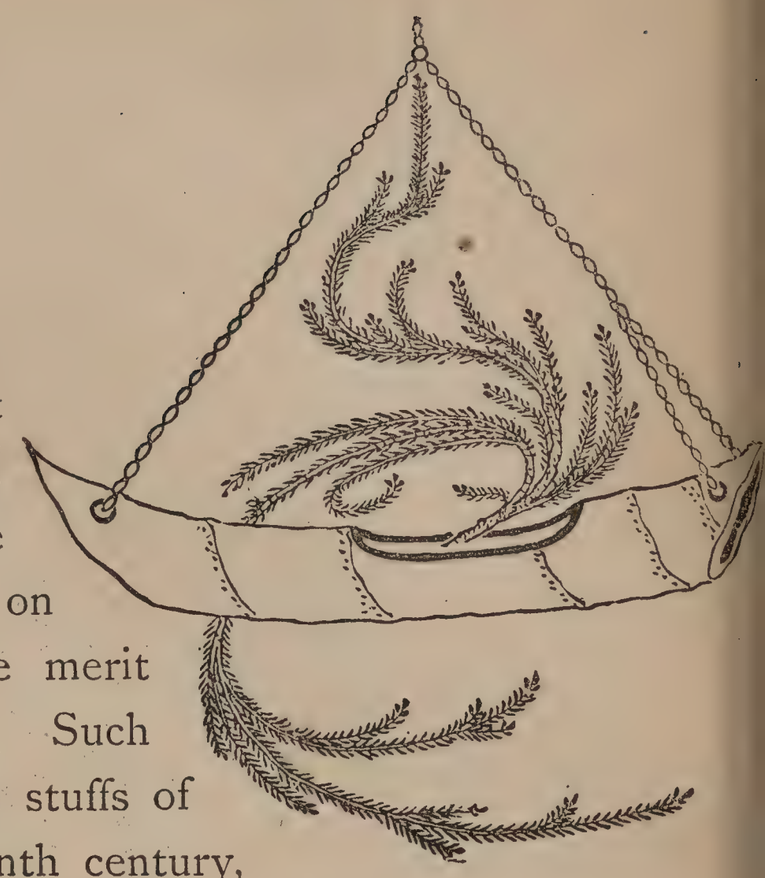
Reproduction of a kakémono by Kwan-yei (commencement of the eighteenth century). The signature is accompanied by the surname of the artist, Jugetsu-Saï-Boyei-In.

A.-B. **Vase** formed by two lotus leaves. Bronze, of a dark patina. Seventeenth century.

THE

JAPANESE AS DECORATORS.

I have elsewhere expressed my opinion on the artistic genius of the Japanese, and have said plainly that they are the greatest decorators in the world. This very decided verdict requires explanation and elucidation, and this should not be inappropriate in a publication especially designed to introduce the knowledge of, and do honour to the Art of Japan. I am therefore grateful to M. Bing for having given me the



opportunity of unfolding shortly my opinion on a subject that for a long time has deeply engrossed me. When I said that the Japanese were the greatest decorators in the world, I did not by any means intend to throw discredit on the decorative art of other nations, or to disparage the merit of productions whose artistic value is universally accepted. Such products as Persian pottery, Gothic stained glass, Venetian stuffs of the fifteenth century, and French furniture of the eighteenth century, will always remain works of real beauty, to which no others of their kind will ever be preferred. But I would draw attention to the fact that a feeling for decorative art is born in the Japanese. Always and everywhere he makes an object worthy of a decorator, and I here use the word "decorator" in its noblest and most exalted sense. Art exists for him as something more than a creation to enhance the morality of life: it is to him a mental and physical luxury which is intended by its refinement to increase our satisfaction in living. In the same way in the higher and more severe spheres, those of religious or historical art, the Japanese artist submits to the ordinances of education which compel him first of all to please the eye before exciting and charming the intellect. He subordinates himself without any apparent effort, and as if it was inherent in his nature, to all the canons of taste. It is necessary to think of this in judging and understanding a Japanese work of art, and this applies to the commonest as to the choicest articles. If this is borne in mind, then everything is clear, all explains itself, and all that was inexplicable at first in those creations which are Japanese in style becomes a new object of admiration. The Japanese has, in common with his brethren belonging to other Oriental races, an innate decorative sense; but in his case it is assisted and refined by a clear conception of the beauty of nature, by the influence of customs of ancient date, and many other complex causes—such, for instance, as his method of writing, and even of holding the brush. These have enabled him to exercise to the extremest limits this decorative capacity.

From Hokusai's *Mang-wa* (1820).

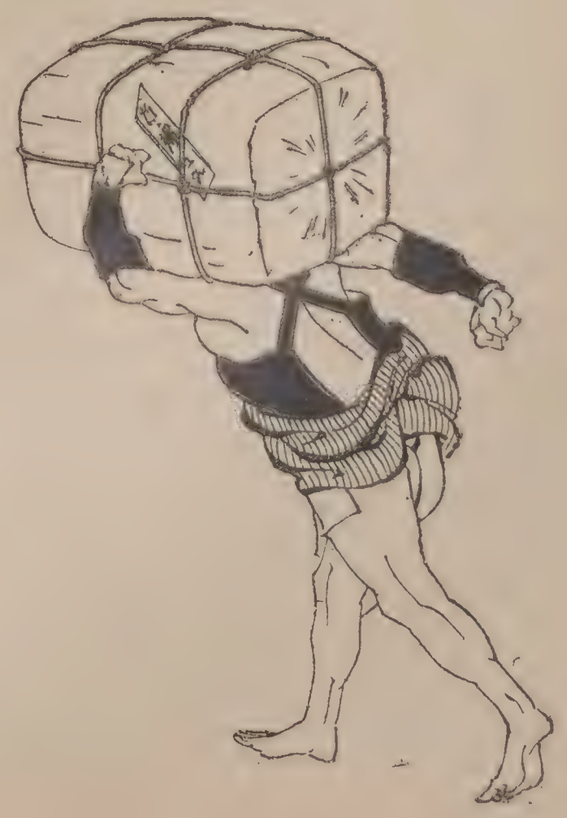
This sense has been still further sharpened by a natural taste for synthesis, by a marvellous instinct for the resources of colour, a thorough

From an original sketch (late eighteenth century).

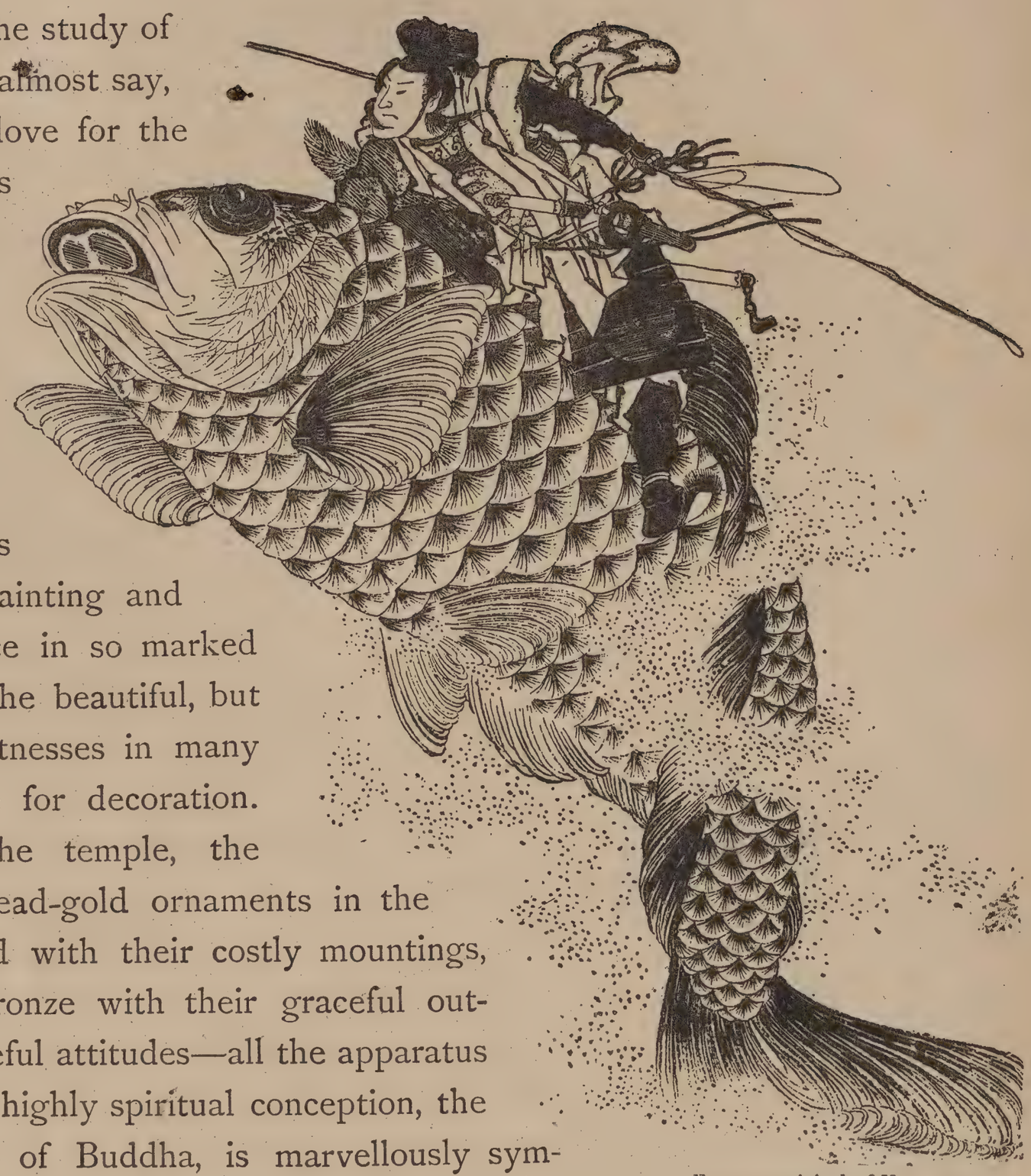
knowledge of colour harmony, and a delicate perception as to its employment. This unique concurrence of qualities has made the Japanese the most thoroughly qualified nation to take Art into the usages of everyday life, for the ornamentation of the home; it has made them devotees of luxury, ornament, grace, and originality in decoration. It is this predominance over other races as regards the decorative principle in every phase of Art, that has given me ground for asserting that the Japanese are the greatest decorators of the world.

Although I myself do not know how sufficiently to praise this phase in their artistic genius, I am well aware that by some it is used as an argument in diminution of their artistic capacity. To such as these, this power of design ought to add psychological and quasi-literary suggestions which should increase its value. This is the point of view of the æsthetic of the Arian races, and we by no means wish to speak disparagingly of it. The point of view of the Japanese is more confined; but, once understood, it will seem logical and natural: it suits a people whose physical feelings are refined in the extreme. The consequences of this temperament have had their effect even on the lowest branches of Japanese industry. During the long periods of peace, when the creations of its taste expanded themselves in all their wealth, Japan was, as it were, seized with a universal dilettantism. In all grades of society, from the most humble workman to the most accomplished prince, the

Composition of Toyohiro (1780).

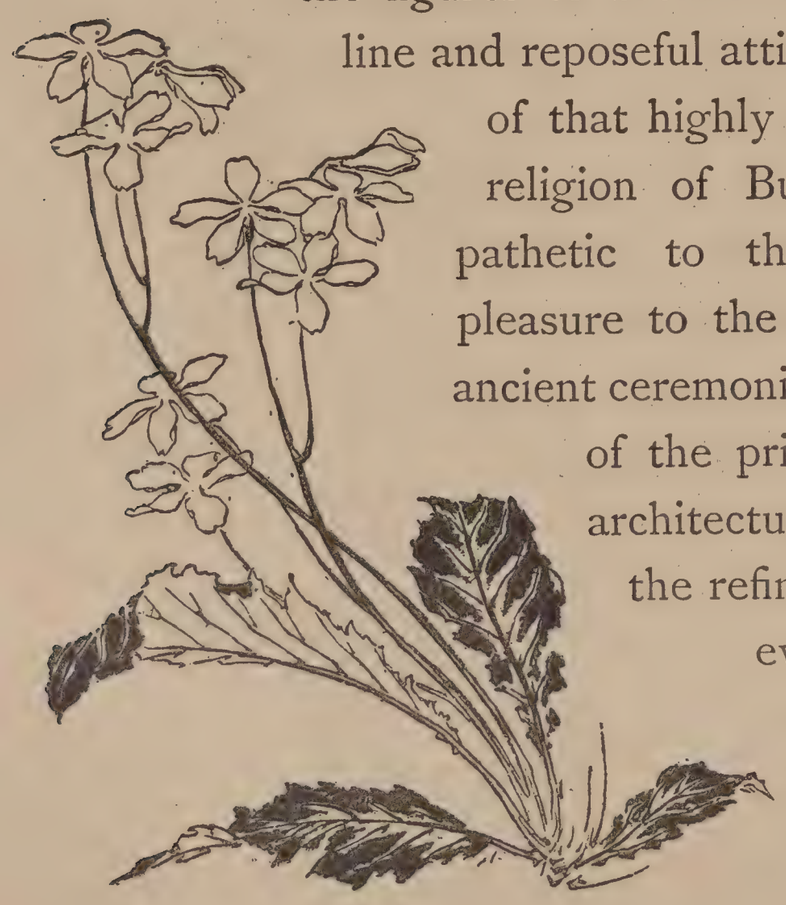


nation seemed to live for the study of Art; it became, one might almost say, possessed by an inherent love for the beautiful. Greece alone offers a parallel example of so pure and complete an enthusiasm for the pleasures of imagination and the continuous exercise of the æsthetic faculties.



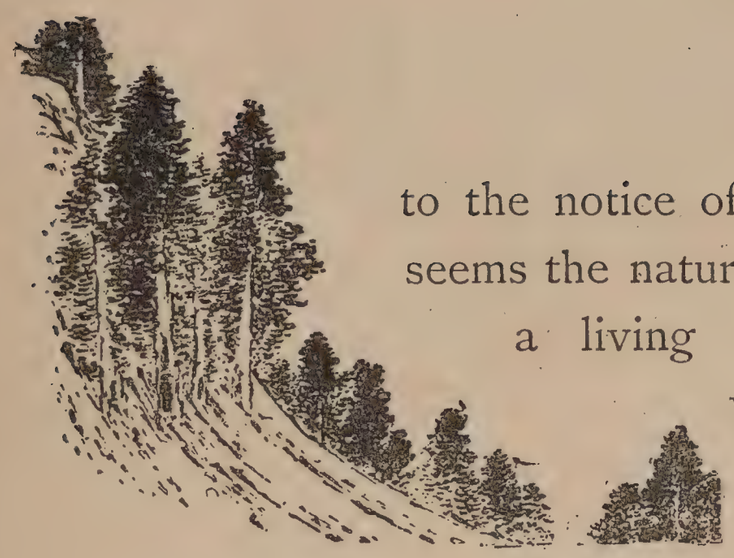
From an original of Yanagawa Shigénobu (1820).

Religious art, so far as regards the branches of painting and sculpture, does not evidence in so marked a degree the same love of the beautiful, but still in outward form it witnesses in many ways to the Japanese taste for decoration. The great pictures of the temple, the Buddhist rolls with their dead-gold ornaments in the style of old miniatures and with their costly mountings, the figures of bronze with their graceful outline and reposeful attitudes—all the apparatus of that highly spiritual conception, the religion of Buddha, is marvellously sympathetic to the general idea of giving pleasure to the eye. In addition to all this, the pomp of ancient ceremonies, the unequalled splendour of the vestments of the priests, and around all the colouring of the architectural frame, and we shall have some idea of the refinement which this nation of artists imparted even to the minutest details of the exercise of its religion.



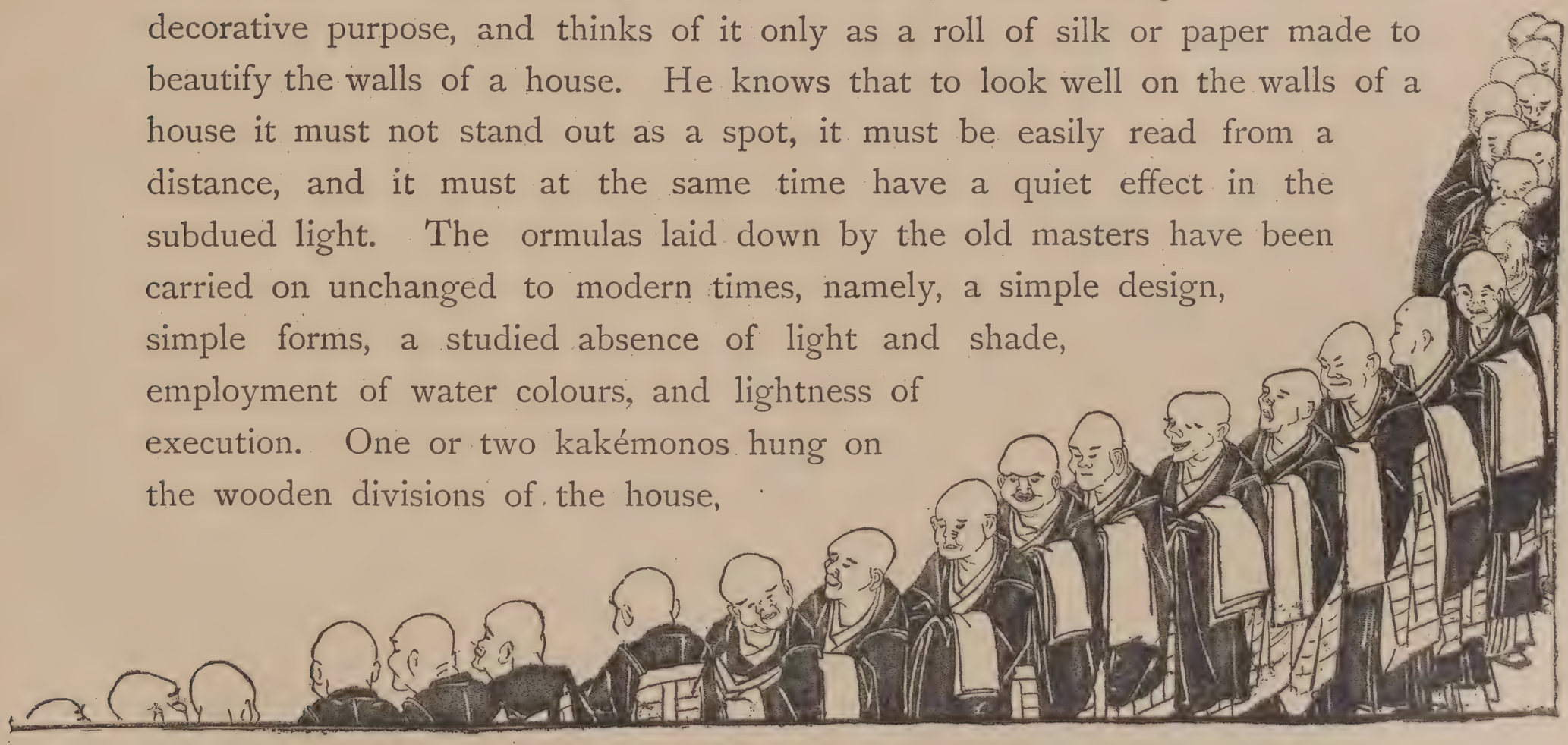
From Hokkei's *Man-gwa* (1820).

The Japanese have nowhere given fuller play to their delight in harmonising colours than in the construction of their temples—Buddhist or Shintoist. It is by the thought bestowed upon this decoration, much more than by the structures themselves, that the religious architecture of the Japanese recommends itself



From Hokusai's *Man-gwa*, vol. x. (1825).

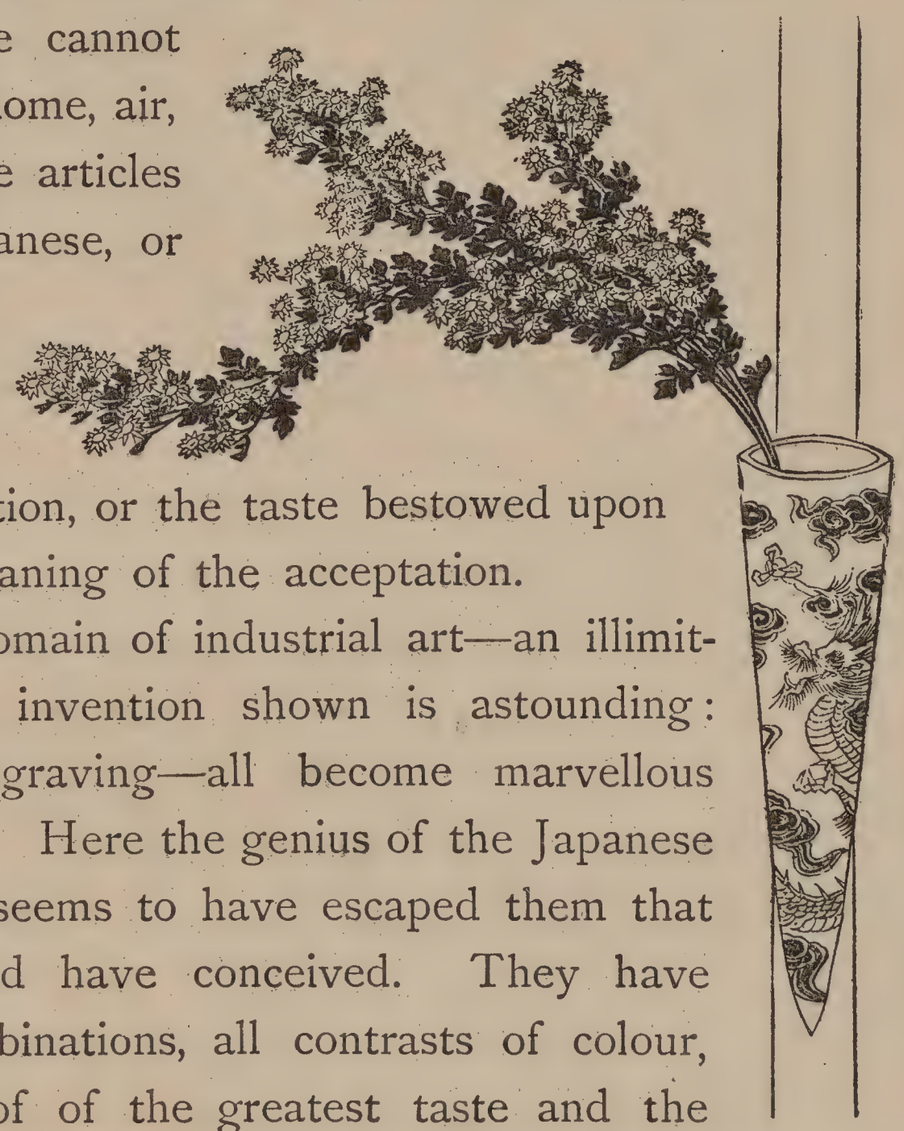
to the notice of the foreigner. From whatever point it is regarded, it seems the natural complement of the landscape; it associates itself like a living organism; it is quite in keeping with the luxurious vegetation which envelops it, the free growth of which the Japanese take delight in, as making a picture essentially picturesque. Trees, rocks, and water play their part in the symphony. It is in the midst of the choicest scenery that the Japanese delights to see elegant porticos raising their graceful outline, arrangements of lanterns, bronze vases, chapels with wonderfully carved roofs, and pagodas in red lac, whose brilliant colours contrast with the green of the pine trees. It is by this perfect accord between the framework and the picture that the æsthetic rightness of Japanese Art so strikingly affirms itself. According to this sequence of ideas, the artists of Japan have produced work unequalled in beauty. Look at the Temple of Nikko for instance, which was raised in the seventeenth century by the Shogun Yemitsu to the memory of Yeyas, and see whether it was not designed quite as much for the general effect—as a picturesque *mise en scène*, as we should say—as for its richness of ornament. But what is true with regard to religious art is much more so with regard to profane and familiar art. The Japanese painter in designing a kakémono or wall-painting always starts by remembering its particular decorative purpose, and thinks of it only as a roll of silk or paper made to beautify the walls of a house. He knows that to look well on the walls of a house it must not stand out as a spot, it must be easily read from a distance, and it must at the same time have a quiet effect in the subdued light. The ormulas laid down by the old masters have been carried on unchanged to modern times, namely, a simple design, simple forms, a studied absence of light and shade, employment of water colours, and lightness of execution. One or two kakémonos hung on the wooden divisions of the house,



Fragment of a composition representing a religious ceremony. From vol. v. of the *Suikoden*, a novel in 90 volumes, by Hokusai (1800–1830).

From an album of Hokusai, signed "Taïto" (1830).

a pair of movable screens, decorated like the kakémonos, with some pleasant subject, a flower-vase or two, a few commonplace objects in bronze or china, were deemed sufficient by a Japanese of distinction for the decoration of the chamber where he received his guests. It is remarkable that the Japanese will have nothing to do with an object which does not answer some particular use; he does not understand the use of anything which serves the purpose merely of an art object; he is not a collector in the European sense of the word; he cannot bear useless "curios"; he likes in his home, air, light, and plenty of space. But all the articles used in the everyday life of the Japanese, or which form part of his costume, are designed so as to assume the most varied forms, and they become either by their intrinsic value, technical perfection, or the taste bestowed upon them, works of Art in the highest meaning of the acceptation.



But we are trenching upon the domain of industrial art—an illimitable subject, wherein the power of invention shown is astounding: lacquer, fabrics, chasing, pottery, engraving—all become marvellous through the fairy touch of these artists. Here the genius of the Japanese *must* provoke admiration, for nothing seems to have escaped them that a subtle instinct for decoration would have conceived. They have experimented with all forms, all combinations, all contrasts of colour, and everywhere they have given proof of the greatest taste and the most rational feeling. Those who only know Japanese Art from the wretched modern products, so feeble in every way, will perhaps smile at my praise; those, on the contrary, who love Japanese Art, and have had chances of seeing authentic work of the best time, will understand and, I hope, agree with me. The collections formed by the amateurs of Paris, London, and New York give us, happily, arguments of irresistible eloquence, for nowhere else can one find such numerous specimens of the choicest work. Their examination will show us better than all reasoning the variety and ingenuity of the Japanese decorators. Every effort, every repetition, every reproduction, is new, original, fresh, in perfect sympathy with nature, object, and material, and, as it were, animated with a free

From an original sketch (late eighteenth century).

and airy grace. Yes, I repeat it, the Japanese are the greatest decorators of the world.

They may have failed to adequately translate the beauties of the human form, or the heights and depths of portraiture, but they have carried picturesque treatment of line and colour further than any other race.

I shall hope to return to some of the points that I have just glanced at here, and show some of the lessons to be learnt from them.

LOUIS GONSE.

NOTES UPON THE ILLUSTRATIONS TO NOS. 1 AND 2.

When we first determined to offer to the public a work dealing with Japanese Art, we did not propose to supplement the illustrations with detailed explanation, for we considered that each representation so clearly explained itself, that it would not require any commentary. But others are not of our way of thinking, and therefore we shall in future give a short epitome of the history, character, and the peculiarities of our illustrations.

Taking up first those illustrations which deal with the art of painting, we would draw attention to three distinct styles represented by the plates lettered D. (No. 1), G.-G. (No. 2), and the double-page plate (No. 2). None of these belong to the early academic or rival styles, known by the names of the Tosa and Kano Schools. At the date of the oldest of the three, that of the figure of a woman (the double-page plate, No. 2), these schools were in rapid decadence. The dawn was breaking of a new style which was to revive the languishing strength of the painter's art, and to break through stiff rules which had been rigidly followed for many centuries. This was the glorious epoch of Genroku (1688–1704),* when the whole nation seemed possessed by an artistic furore. It was then that Moronobu flourished, the founder of the Popular School, called Ukioyé, of which Hokusai was the most perfect example.

The full-length portrait which (double-page plate, No. 2) we give is the work of Kaigetsudo, one of the most brilliant pupils of Moronobu; he lived in the period 1716–1735. It is hardly necessary to set out the masterly qualities which characterise this painting. The colour and the gold so cleverly arranged, the harmony of the tones of colour, combine to heighten the rich effect of a dress, the design of which is drawn with a vigour and certainty of handling only to be found in the work of great artists. In Japanese paintings, more perhaps than in any others, boldness and freedom in the brush-work are the invariable evidences of a master.†

Plate D., No. 1, offers us an example of another naturalistic school—known by the name of Shijo, and founded at Kioto by Maruyama Okio (born 1733). This kakémono, representing monkeys, is by Mori Sosen, born in 1747. The execution displays a genius for this style of subject which is unequalled. It is said that Sosen passed the greater part of his existence in the forests, in order to study the habits of animals in their wild state.

Plate G.-G. (No. 2), reproduces another kakémono of the same (Shijo) school. Here we find a poetical landscape, painted in the early morning; the plains are lost to sight in a misty atmosphere, which in Japan invariably calls forth the praises of the poet. The vapours which

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* In Japan and in China, no calendar was known by which time was measured by regular intervals. Time in history was divided into periods or cycles (called "Nengo") of an uncertain duration, the beginning of each of which coincided with some memorable event.

† To give an idea of the masterly drawing of this picture, we may add that in the original kakémono the figure measures thirty inches in height.

cling to the summits of the mountains or float down into the valleys form, during the greater part of the year, a gauzy moving curtain through which the landscape seems but a mirage, now assuming a solid form, and again veiling itself in uncertainty. In all times, and to all artists, this condition of nature has been a favourite subject.

Passing now to our reproduction of engravings in colour, we find in Plate A. (No. 1) an example of a landscape with a clear bright atmosphere, a light mist only hiding the foot of the mountain and rendering the hulls of the distant fishing-boats indistinct. The delicate touch of the brush here gives way to the more precise and firm lines of the graver, and to the strength of colour which a wood-block always produces.

The artist (Hiroshigé) here represents the margin of the lovely Lake Biwa, whose shape suggests the musical instrument like a guitar, which is called by the same name.

Hiroshigé was born at Yedo in 1797, and belonged to the popular school; he treated every imaginable subject, but above all landscape, which he rendered in an original manner.

In the plate G.-C. (No. 2), which reproduces an engraving from a work by Hokusai, we now arrive at subjects taken from everyday life. These are treated with a clearness of perception and a frankness so refreshing, the feeling in them is so natural and yet so personal, everything is so intensely lifelike, and drawn with so sure a touch, that it requires but little insight into Japanese Art to recognise the artist who produced them. It can be none other than the great master Hokusai. What a vast difference exists between these sketches and the portrait of the young woman by Kaigetsudo! The latter showed the first efforts of the realistic school to break away from the trammels of tradition, but still evidences the calm and almost severe style of the classic school; whereas Hokusai's two drawings are the product of an art completely freed from all the obstacles which formerly held in bondage its creative fancy.

Plate G.-D. (No. 2), which finishes for a time our series of reproductions of engravings, is of a very modest tone. It does not pretend to amuse us with any lively story; but, instead, it speaks very plainly of the peaceful life of a flower. It would be difficult to find a truer portrait of a pink, with its ragged appearance, and its stem so frail that it bows at the will of the tiniest breeze.

The studies of plants and birds in plates C. and E. (in No. 1) are examples of the conscientious care which the Japanese imposes upon himself in his art. While no detail escapes him in his rendering of a blade of grass, the body of the bird is simply indicated under its different aspects in a summary manner, the artist's intention having been merely to jot down certain notes for his future guidance.

In the plates G. and H. and A.-J. (in No. 1), as in those lettered D.-H. and F.-D. in the present number, we see some of the innumerable motives created by the fertile imagination of the industrial designers of whose genius for decoration M. Louis Gonse pleads so ably.

If we are rightly proud of the creations of our European artists, surely we ought also to reverence those outside our continent, who by their unaffected work have shown the way to artisans in a country where all the industries are indissolubly connected with Art in its highest sense.

Plates B. (No. 1) and E.-G. (No. 2) show how much the weavers have profited from the work of the great designers. The two examples of textiles which we have before us must at once excite our admiration by the elegance of their designs, taken on this, as on all other occasions, from the innumerable resources of nature. Thrown on a neutral ground with lightness, solidity, and ease, the arrangement of the decoration produces an effect of great richness. At the same time the technical perfection of the weaving and the durability of the dyes is such that several centuries of wear have left none of their traces on the fabric.

After luxurious clothing comes furniture, such as the bronze vases of which we see specimens on Plate I. (No. 1) and A.-B. (No. 2), which with us would be considered curios. For a Japanese these are an essential element in the decoration of the house. For are they not for the purpose of holding the flowering branch, which is to stand out in bright relief against the sombre tones of the bronze or of the pottery? And to render the contrast more striking, it is usual to have a very simple form for the vases that are destined to hold the often curiously twisted stalks of a flower.

We must not leave metal-work without saying at least a few words about sword guards, of which four specimens are given on Plate E.-E. (No. 2). The subject of sword guards will no doubt be treated in this publication eventually with all the importance that it commands. For the description of these four reproductions we must refer to the "contents" of this number, here limiting ourselves to admiration only of the wonderful work in so hard a metal as iron. One feels inclined to believe that the metal must be easily malleable at will. The design is charming both in its grace and the pureness of its outline, and a peculiarity not less worthy of note is the ease with which the maker succeeds in confining within a circle a whole branch of a plant without losing any of its natural suppleness.

We must speak shortly of the branch of art represented by Plate F., and by the altar-table, Plate A.-A. (No. 2). No proof of weakness is to be gathered from these and similar works of excessive fineness. When the nature of an object claims in its execution vigour and energy, the Japanese artist at once pushes these qualities to their utmost limits, and now and then this determination has no limits but his innate good taste. What is the secret force that carries him so strongly onward? We can find it in the intentness with which he pursues his desire for expression of life in his work—that life which (we cannot repeat it too often) ought to animate all that makes his mind eager to produce new and original effects.

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

H. Gérard.

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

KAKÉMONO. — École de MORONOBOU. Fin du XVIIe siècle.

par GILLOT

AB

H. Lévéard.

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

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A Monthly Illustrated Journal

OF

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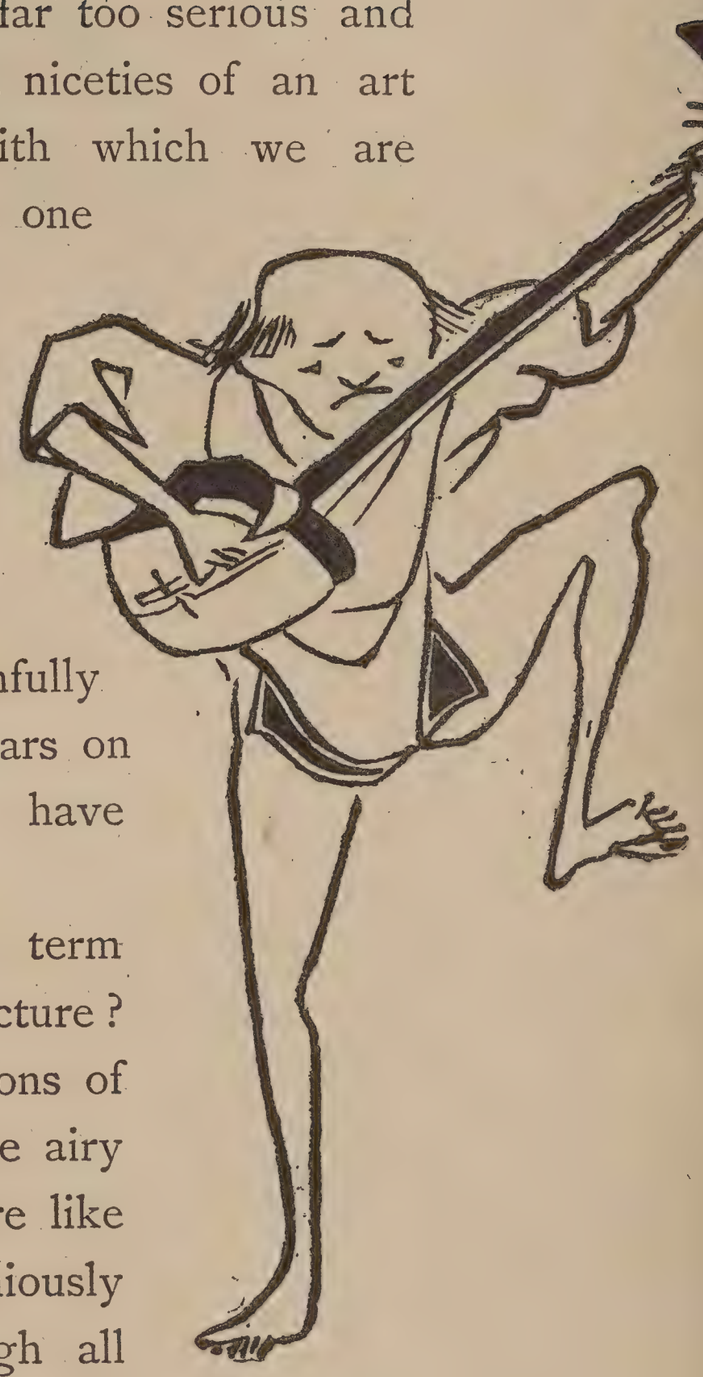
豐國神像

JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE.

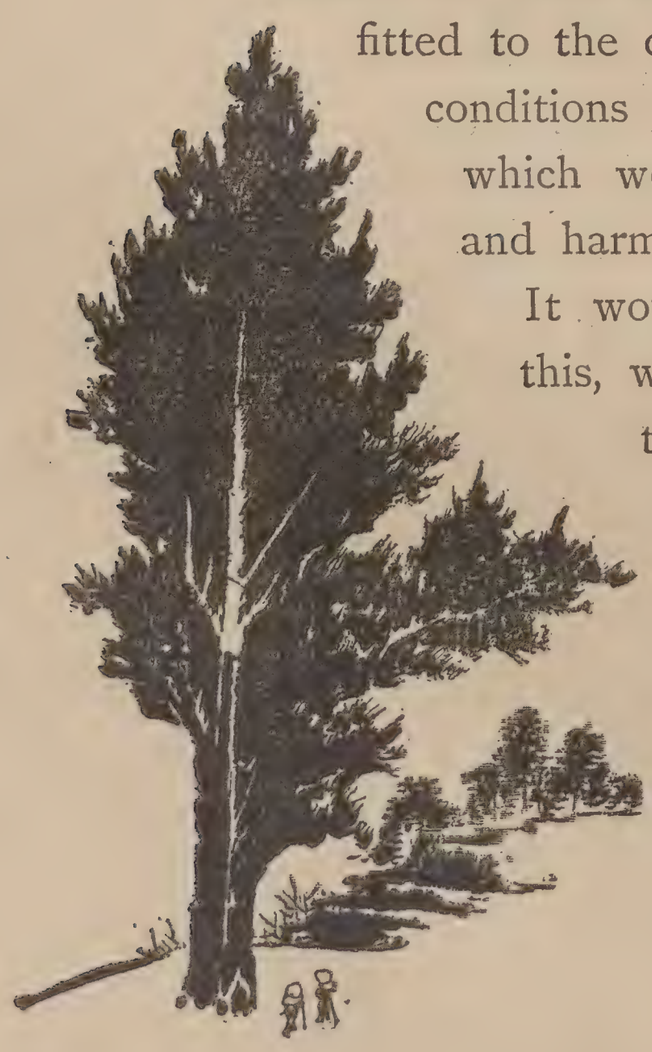
How long, solemn, and imposing the word "architecture" seems when applied to the frail and graceful constructions in which the fascinating people of Nippon dwell! My pen has just traced the word, and I at once feel

distrustful of our European vocabulary, as being far too serious and matter-of-fact for translating the affectations and niceties of an art more delicate than anything of the sort with which we are acquainted. The sensation is exactly that which one experiences upon seeing some rare and fragile object grasped by rough hands which threaten every moment to destroy it. To my mind, whenever we speak of the Japanese, it ought to be understood that our language demands focussing to a special scale; it must lose in breadth in order to gain in clearness if we are to preserve to the things we describe their true value, and to faithfully represent the pictures of a country where everything appears on a scale entirely different in proportion to all that we have hitherto been accustomed to.



Japanese Architecture! Can we call it by the same term as Greek Architecture, Roman Architecture, Gothic Architecture? What! must the same word include colossal constructions of stone, marble monuments which defy the centuries, and the airy temples, and the little houses made in wood and paper, more like *bonbonnières* with movable divisions, minute boxes ingeniously arranged, and coming to pieces like toys! Yes, though all that difference exists, the term is the right one, and we must keep to it, even if our language could furnish us with a diminutive having the same sense.

For, if the definition holds good, which says that architecture is the material expression of the desires and the manners of a people; that the style of building is the exterior form of the ideas, genius, and religion of a nation, we must agree that the Japanese possess an architecture admirably fitted to the character of their civilization, wonderfully appropriate to the conditions of their climate, and which shows the elements of beauty which we are accustomed to look for in this art, namely, unity and harmony, in its varied forms no less than any European style.



It would be astonishing were it otherwise—that a people like this, which has revealed itself to us in so brilliant a manner by the wonders of industry, which we can never cease to admire, which in the smallest objects of everyday use can put such consummate art, so much character and such perfection, could have built for themselves homes

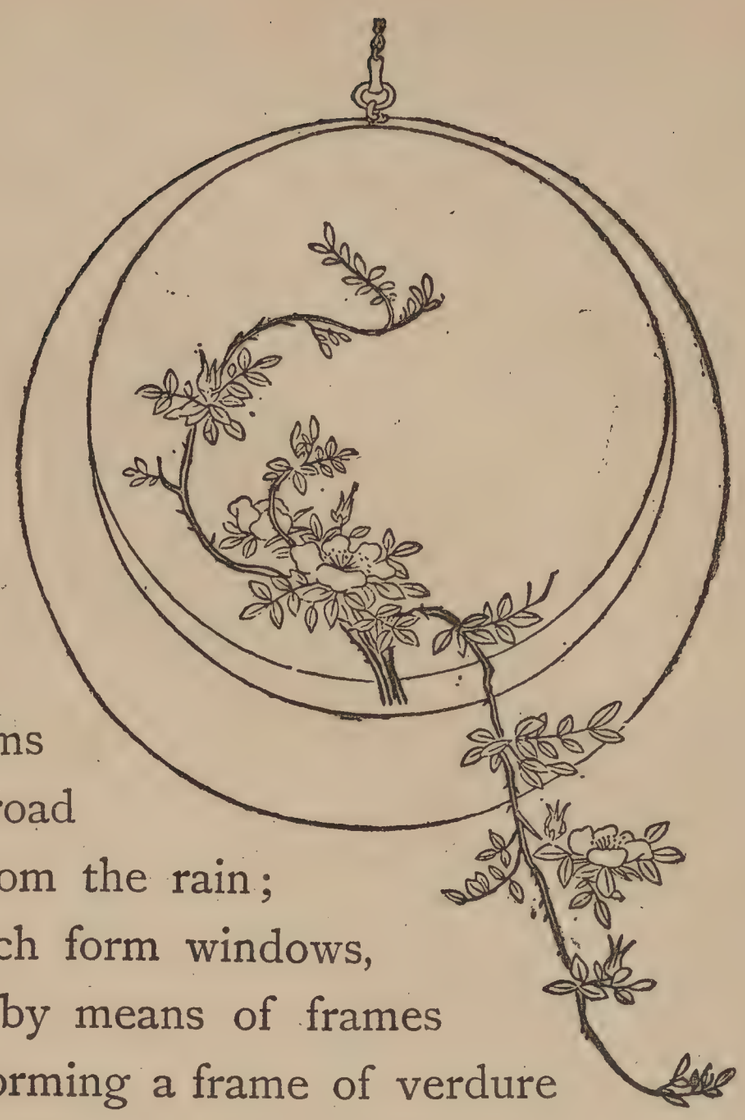
without grace, or for their gods, temples without design.

What are the distinguishing characteristics of this Japanese architecture—what are the rules of its structure, the logic of its composition? These points I would briefly explain, and they come with much appropriateness at the commencement of a review devoted to the study of Japanese Art.

For to architecture (being as it is a manifestation of one of the first wants of man, namely, shelter and comfort) one must go if it is desired to find out the generative principles of those other arts which follow, and are derived from it, and are less rigorously in bondage to strict laws of reason. But before one begins to speak of the picturesque aspect of the constructions and forms, which are the consequence of social habits, and are peculiar to the race, it is necessary to remember clearly certain fundamental laws of a peculiar nature to which Japanese architecture has been subjected, and which have governed its development and limited its range.

There are two principal factors which in all countries exercise an influence on the fashion of architecture, but which do so in a still greater degree in Japan than elsewhere—I refer to the climatic condition and the nature of the soil.

The climate of Japan is of the most variable nature: although in the centre of the country the cold is very great in winter, in the south it is hardly felt at all. Everywhere rains are frequent, especially from the end of the month of April till the



month of June, and they are followed by a long period of heat. It has therefore been necessary to construct habitations to serve as shelter both against the rain and the sun, and which will suit both a quiet indoor life and a life in the open air.

From this cause have originated the special forms given to the houses: those great roofs with the broad eaves, which give shade from the sun and shelter from the rain; the balconies and the terraces; the great recesses which form windows, which can be opened more or less, and are closed by means of frames running in grooves; the gardens, full of freshness, forming a frame of verdure to nearly every house.

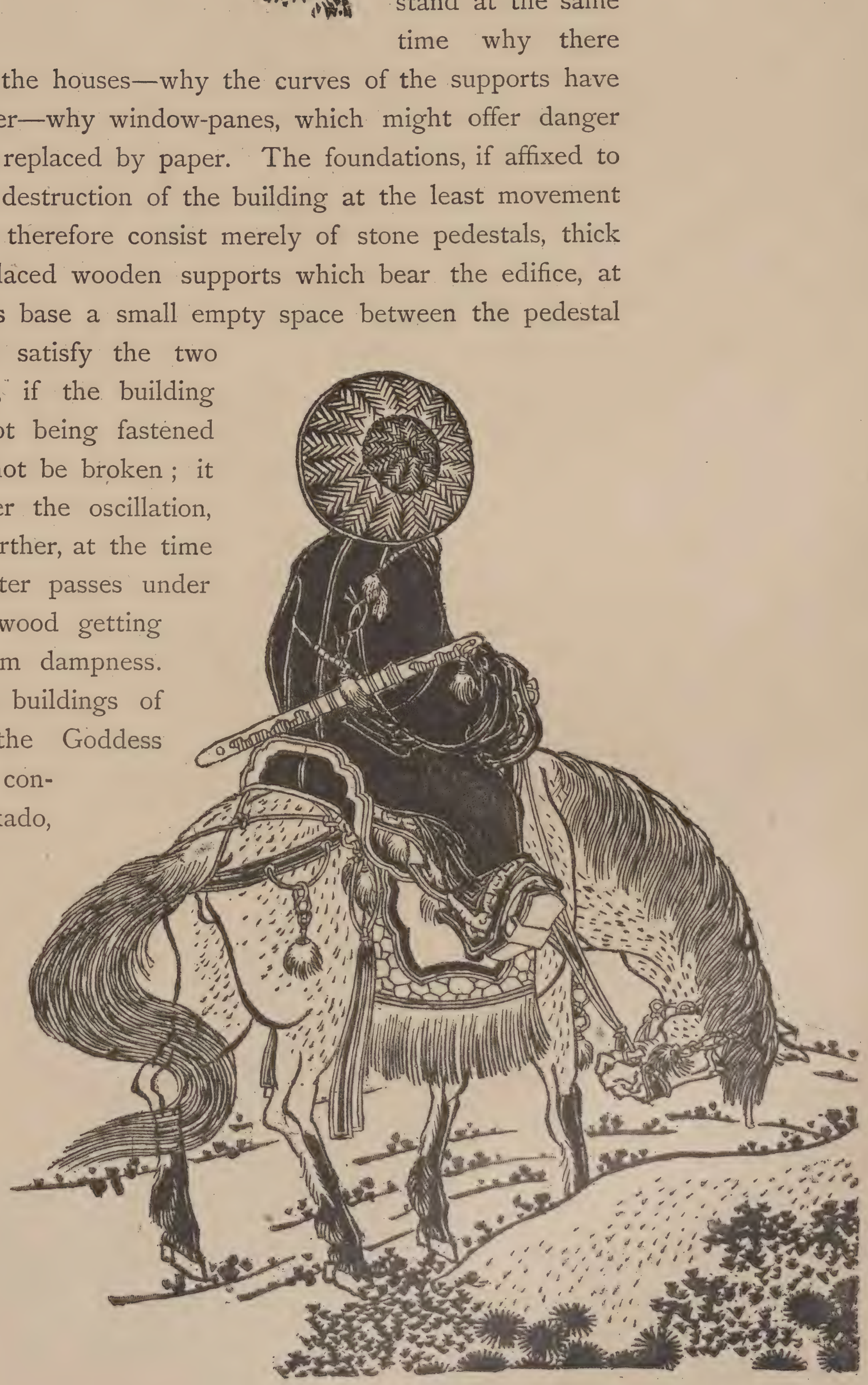
As to the other factor, it is even more exacting: the volcanic soil of Japan, and the constant earthquakes resulting from it, have from time immemorial necessitated the almost exclusive use of wood in constructions. The whole explanation of Japanese architecture lies in this fact. It is from the nature of the materials that the choice of forms has arisen. It is from this obstacle that the whole design of the art has sprung. Edifices of an extreme elasticity were a necessity, capable of resisting the storms of wind and of standing upright in spite of the severest earthquake shocks. The genius of the Japanese has triumphed over these difficulties. Their architects have built temples, of which some are a thousand years old and are standing intact.

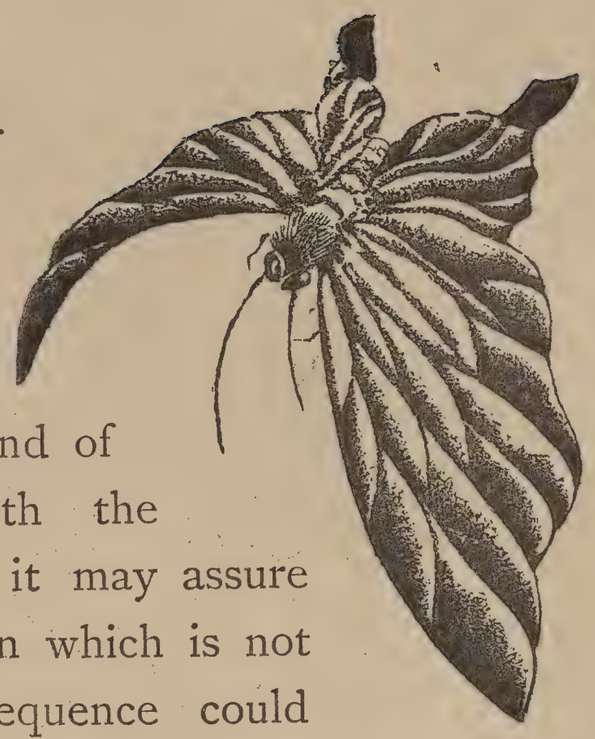
Obliged to abandon stone—of which there is abundance in the country, in spite of what one has been given to understand—in favour of wood, they have executed marvels of elegance, richness, and solidity. What was a difficulty in structure they have turned into an element of decoration; from obstacles which might have paralysed them they have produced unlooked-for and beautiful effects.

Examine from this standpoint any structure in Japan, and you will easily be able to account for the place that this idea of resistance has held in the

arrangements of the architect, and how he has made the best of the materials he was obliged to use with infinite taste.

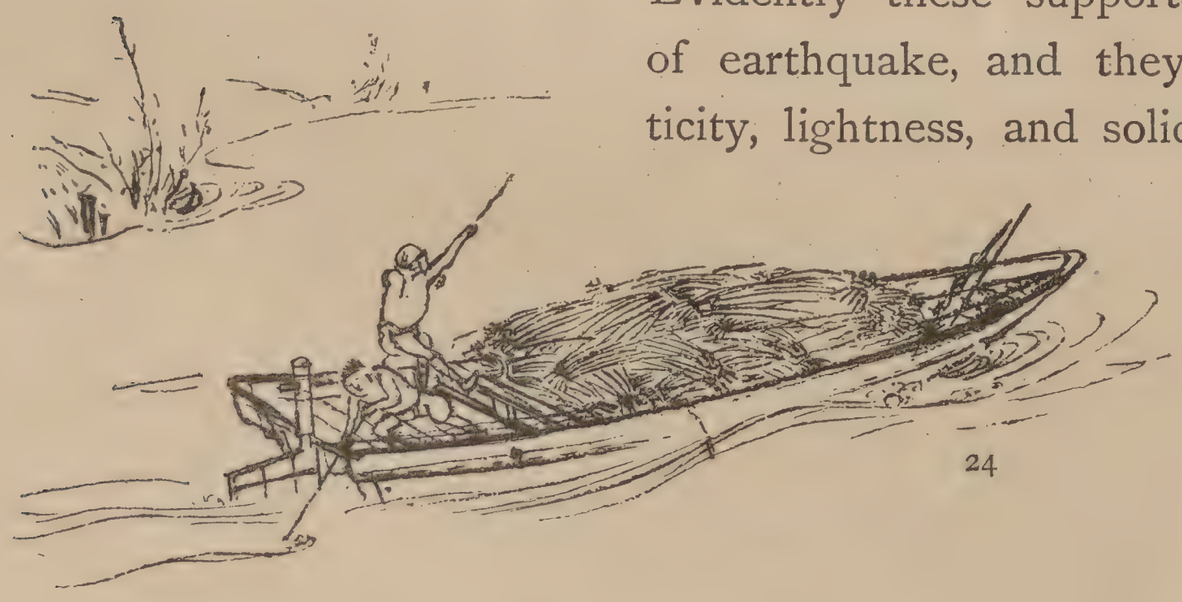
You will understand at the same time why there are often no foundations to the houses—why the curves of the supports have one form rather than another—why window-panes, which might offer danger when broken to pieces, are replaced by paper. The foundations, if affixed to the earth, would ensure the destruction of the building at the least movement of the volcanic soil. They therefore consist merely of stone pedestals, thick and strong, on which are placed wooden supports which bear the edifice, at the same time leaving at its base a small empty space between the pedestal and the wood, so as to satisfy the two following conditions:—First, if the building were to receive a shock, not being fastened to the pedestal it could not be broken; it keeps it elasticity, and after the oscillation, falls into its place again; further, at the time of the heavy rains, the water passes under the supports without the wood getting wet, thus preserving it from dampness. One of the most ancient buildings of Japan, the temple of the Goddess Kwan-non, at Nara, which contains the treasures of the Mikado, is built on this system: its supports are elevated not to the height of several inches, but more than a yard, like piles. It dates back more than 1200 years, and has not stirred at all. Secondly, in





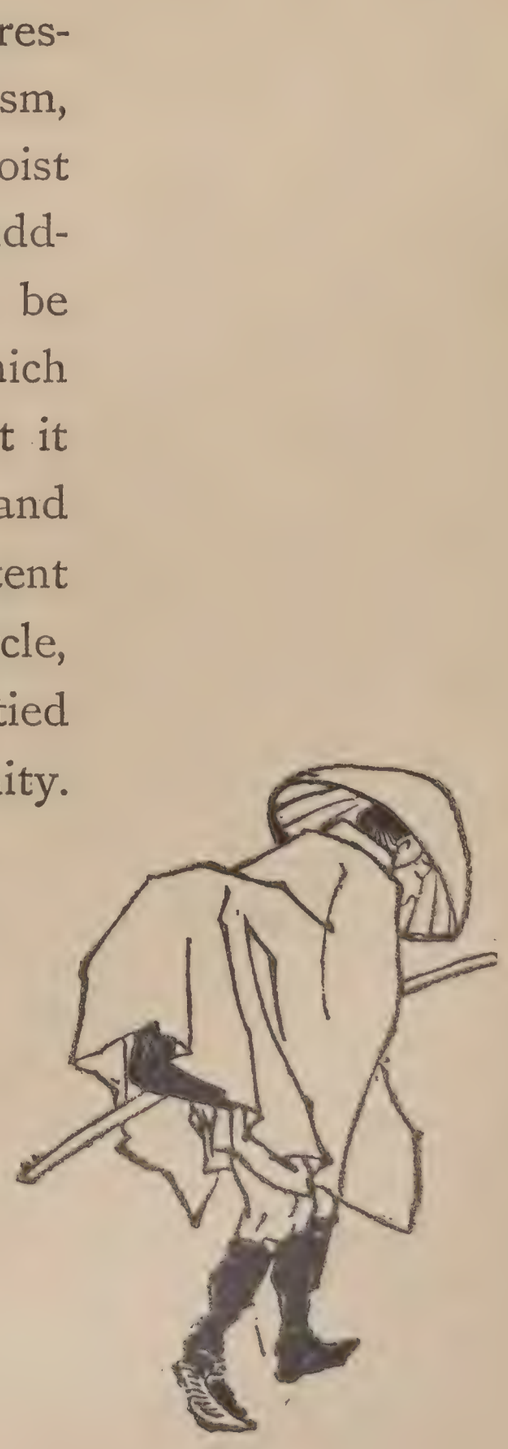
consequence of this principle, the roofing, which plays such a great part in Japanese architecture, is alway heavy and of large dimensions, made with the greatest care, in order that it may assure the equilibrium of the erection which is not fastened, and which in consequence could easily be turned over.

The quantity of wood used in making the roofs and ceilings of certain temples in Japan is extraordinary. One is inclined to believe there must be waste; but all is minutely calculated—each beam has its place, each mortice its reason, and each support some object. Some ancient pagodas exist of such an elevation that one wonders how it is possible they have stood till now, in spite of earthquakes; it is because of the ingenuity of the frame-work. There are some where one sees a central pillar of wood, which in the interior is carried to the top and seems to support the roof. This would be by no means the object of such a pillar in our architecture. In Japan, things are reversed, and this pillar, far from carrying the roof, is actually supported by it; it is, as it were, a prolongation of it; it does not rest on the ground, as one would suppose; it is separated from it by a hardly noticeable interstice; yet it is nevertheless to this that the service is allotted of keeping the centre of gravity of the combined strength of the beams of the roof. In the same way for the characteristically-formed supports, which constitute the entablature, or form the extraordinary projections of some considerable size that one remarks on most Japanese temples; they are formed of little beams from 10 to 12 inches long, with bent ends which are laid together and bound one to another, having regular spaces left between each: from a distance one might compare them to the meshes in a net. Evidently these supports also originated in the danger of earthquake, and they answer the problem of elasticity, lightness, and solidity, of which it was necessary to find a solution. Nothing can be more ingenious and typical.



In the train of these natural and weighty reasons which have ruled the principles of Japanese architecture, come religious influences; but in this case there is no question of construction or dependence on climate. Style, ornament, and decoration have to be considered in connection with the particular intellect of the people, its primitive beliefs—in a word, all that which connects itself with its intellectual and moral development—to the vicissitudes in its history, to the influence exercised on it by other races. It is a question of determining in what measure it has departed from its original sources, and to what extent it has had recourse to borrowing. But such a study is surrounded with difficulties so far as regards Japan, for although it has been of late years the object of learned research, much is still hidden in obscurity. All that one can say in a general way is, that the architecture of Japan is the expression of a complicated Theogony, increased by myths more or less varied, which have furnished nearly all its motives of decoration, and that it corresponds to two distinct cults—Shintoism or the national religion, and Buddhism, imported from India about the seventh century of our era. The Shintoist temples and monuments present marked differences from those of the Buddhists: they are more simple, and of a more unaffected simplicity, and can be recognised by their very singular details of construction. A feature which characterises the architecture of the nations of the extreme East is, that it seems derived from the conception of a tent with its corners raised up and pointed at its summit; but whereas in China the original form of this tent sprang from a cloth thrown over a central pole which it covered in a circle, in Japan, on the contrary, it arose from a cloth thrown over two poles tied together in the form of a St. Andrew's Cross at their upper extremity. Shintoist architecture—in order, no doubt, to preserve the tradition of this primitive construction—has left on the roof of temples two beams crosswise, which are by no means essential to the structure, but are simply there as the remains of ancient custom.

VICTOR CHAMPIER.



(*To be continued in No.* 4.)

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

The art of painting was represented in our former issues by several examples which allowed us to compare the early manifestations of the popular school with the works which show its final expansion. The illustrations in the present number will show some intermediate phases, giving us the productions of several painters who, each in his own particular style, is worthy of the name of a master.

In Plate FB we find the work of a great genius of the eighteenth century. It has been left to others to trace the solidity of bold outlines, or to endow their personages with a powerful masculinity. Suzuki Haronobu has endowed his work with grace and poetical feeling. He is perhaps the only one of Japanese artists who has transcribed the innocent love of early youth. Was it the desire to place these tender scenes in an appropriate frame which caused him to take up this hitherto ignored subject? The engravings of Haronobu are always full of harmony and a sweetness of tone that one searches for in vain in the works of any other time—we dare to say, even in the works of any other country. This will not be found a very hazardous assertion when a few specimens of his art—the least known of any—have been published.

The subject which we give represents a girl who has just plucked two blossoms from a bush at her feet. She has carefully folded round them a sheet of white paper, and destines them for the object of her tenderest affections, whilst her hand prepares to trace the poem, or simple letter perhaps, which will complete the charming message.

The Plate of "Women Shooting with Bows" is a reproduction of an engraving after a composition of Katsugawa Shunsho, founder of a school illustrated by many followers, of whom each has, according to Japanese custom and as a sort of rallying sign, taken the name of Katsugawa, added to his surname. The page we have before us is taken from a work in three volumes, bearing a title which may be translated somewhat in this manner, "A Mirror of the Beauties of the Green House" (1776).* This work was executed with the collaboration of another artist of merit called Kitao Shigemasa, who has copied in a striking fashion the manner of his colleague Shunsho. The "Green House" here represented must have been a pleasure-resort enjoying a great notoriety with the youth of the period; for each of the figures represented in it has her name written at her side. The authors of the work show, in the many pages of which it is composed, a crowd of youthful beauties giving themselves up to their favourite amusements, diverting themselves with games of skill, or improving their minds by the study of painting or poetry. We will not dwell here on the strangeness of the associations of customs so little serious with those of a refined, intellectual culture. We must recollect that we are here

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* It is often difficult to find a translation which will give the exact sense of the names of books, which are constantly most elaborate.

carried back to the civilization of a far distant period, which developed itself upon laws very different to our own.

From the technical point of view, the eye is especially attracted, in these three volumes, by the pink tone which is the essential characteristic of the illustrations.

Plate AI brings us back to Hokusai. It is a page taken from his *Man-gwa*, that wonderful series of fifteen volumes, which is not only the *vade mecum* of every artisan, be he engraver, lacquerer, designer, or decorator, but also offers a vast field of study to every one who is desirous of knowing to what limits truth of attitude and expression of life and movement, united with facility and vigour in the use of the brush, can be pushed in the reproduction of beings and things. Observe on this leaf, which represents hardly the 400th part of the work, all the crowd of holiday-makers. How well represented is each grade of society by its own peculiar characteristics, and how freely they seem to move, as if the artist had caught them in the midst of their daily life!

Plate CB. Studies of flowers engraved after the sketches of Katawo Keisai Masayoshi, who lived in the second half of the eighteenth century. This artist may be considered as the precursor of Hokusai, who probably derived much from Masayoshi's works, full of amusing sketches, often drawn in outline only, and having the most comical aspect. Besides this, Masayoshi left behind him a volume of landscapes, to which our most ardent Impressionists would gladly sign their names; also one of the most remarkable books on fishes; and lastly, a series of studies of flowers, from which we have borrowed our page which is published here.

The right of the composition is occupied by a branch of campanula (*Campanula grandiflora*), in Japanese, "Kikio," an autumn flowering variety with pale-coloured flowers, which grows in Japan, China, and Siberia; the other is a charming grouping of flower and grass. This grass, the *Eulalia Japonica*, as yet little known in our gardens, is a great resource to the Japanese decorator whenever it is necessary for him to lighten his design. All we have here is nothing more than simple information, and a brief summing-up of facts; but the characteristics and the essential organs of the plant are rendered with a truth which shows a profound knowledge arising from a real study of nature.

Plate EH puts us in the presence of a very old friend, for it is a great many years since the *Camellia Japonica* (the "Tsubachi" in Japanese) was brought from its native land to be the founder of a family in our climate. This sketch, borrowed from an unsigned series, bewitches us by the solidity of its composition, no less than by the pleasant form in which it is shown to us.

Plate ED. A vase with cover in terra-cotta. This is a work which dates back hardly twenty years, but still it shows that it has issued from a hand clever in the style of the good old times, and with a feeling for the art of composition which is now lost. The power is shown by the manufacture of an object of this importance without any mould. It is entirely the work of the hand, which has fashioned, as if in wax, the decoration in high relief, as well as the sides themselves

of the vase which form the foundation, and upon which the potter did not object to leaving thumb-marks very plainly visible, doubtless with the intention of rendering some effect of light by this particular method. As for the composition, which seems to have originated without the least effort, it has the great merit of perfect unity—a principle the absence of which we are occasionally obliged to regret in the models of our artists of the West. The feet and the handle of the cover of the vase make us forget that they are indispensable accessories by the place their ornamentation holds in the general idea of the object.

Plate DJ. Is this only the outcome of some lucky chance, or does it aim at a scientific demonstration of the laws of mechanism, to which the lively inhabitant of the fish-pond owes its wonderful suppleness? Or again, has this work been inspired by a desire to wrestle with a great technical difficulty? There must have been something of all these in the mind of the artist, for they all agree well with the Japanese temperament. It is, however, the charm of a difficulty to surmount which must have predominated in this case; for instead of choosing wood or some equally tractable material, the artist has determined on *iron*—that is to say, on the substance which both in appearance and in texture offers the greatest contrast to the soft and slimy nature of a frog. And he taxes his ingenuity, making movable the different parts of the body by means of articulations so cleverly arranged that they act in the most natural manner possible.

In his reproduction of the object Mr. H. Guérard has chosen three different aspects; he might easily have chosen a hundred, all equally quaint. Take the animal by his little foot and throw him in the air, he will infallibly fall into the helpless attitude of a poor little corpse; put him on his legs again and he looks ready to escape from you at one wild bound. The marks on his back are copied by means of little silver nails, his movable eyes are imitated by gold encrustation on the iron.

The specimen bears no signature; but it is doubtless from the hand of one of the Miochins, a family of celebrated artists who, during the course of five or six centuries, worked in iron in a marvellous manner, making the gorgeous armour for all the warriors and princes of renown, but not scorning sometimes to divert their genius by the manufacture of some such wondrous object of fancy as this.*

Plates AF and CG. Two industrial designs, of which one (AF) represents fishes. It is by no means a new thing to see the forms of animals used as elements of decoration in a coloured paper or in stuffs; but while it has always seemed necessary to submit them to some alteration, to conventionalise or ornamentalise them, so that even the Persians, those decorators *par excellence*, themselves have not been able to avoid it, it has been reserved for the Japanese to show the possibility of combining arabesques with all objects which attract the attention, without changing their natural shapes.

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* At the South Kensington Museum, London, there is a magnificent specimen of iron-work, executed in the sixteenth century by Miochin Muneharu. It is an eagle, life-size, with outstretched wings, every feather of which is a separate piece of iron.

To see these fishes twisting, turning and twining with a wonderful ease, one can with difficulty persuade oneself that all these lines so naturally curved were drawn for practical utility.

In the design CG, where the clematis flower serves for a motive, one meets with the application of a principle of the same nature. Recognising that the stems of this plant would furnish an agreeable ornamental design, but fearing also that their rather slender elegance would not offer to the view a sufficiently solid effect, the ornament has been cut to pieces, so to speak, and the necessary strength has been imparted by a series of narrow transversal lines. The result of this is a most curious vibratory effect—it appears as if the flowers and leaves were undulating behind a transparent laminated screen.

Here we have, then, a design taken from a plant which, in spite of its almost diaphanous lightness, sufficiently covers a surface without the help of any conventionalising nor of any addition which could lessen the merit of its simplicity. Two slender duplicated stalks of bamboo are thrown upon the surface with the evident intention of breaking up the sameness of the mass of parallel lines.

Plate EI. Reproduction of a dress material in brocaded satin of the eighteenth century. When we stated in the preceding paragraphs that the Japanese artist composes his designs by utilising without the least modification all the elements that he encounters on his way, we were far from pretending that he determines to banish the interpretations that his inventive genius suggests to him; at the same time, always drawing his inspirations from the creations of nature, he seems continually to give himself up to the pleasure of throwing into confusion natural combinations in order to put them together again according to his own ideas. No one more than he has made use of this stratagem, and has carried it to its utmost limits. Nevertheless, the original idea is always traceable; but it is at times so hidden, that it wants the practised eye of a Japanese to recognise it. This is not the case with the pattern of silk that we have before us, because the open flowers of the cherry, as well as the tender buds that accompany them, render it evident that the dark curves that are displayed upon the ground are designed from the branches of the tree, with the intention of breaking up the straight transverse lines, and also to obtain the wavy character desired for the material.

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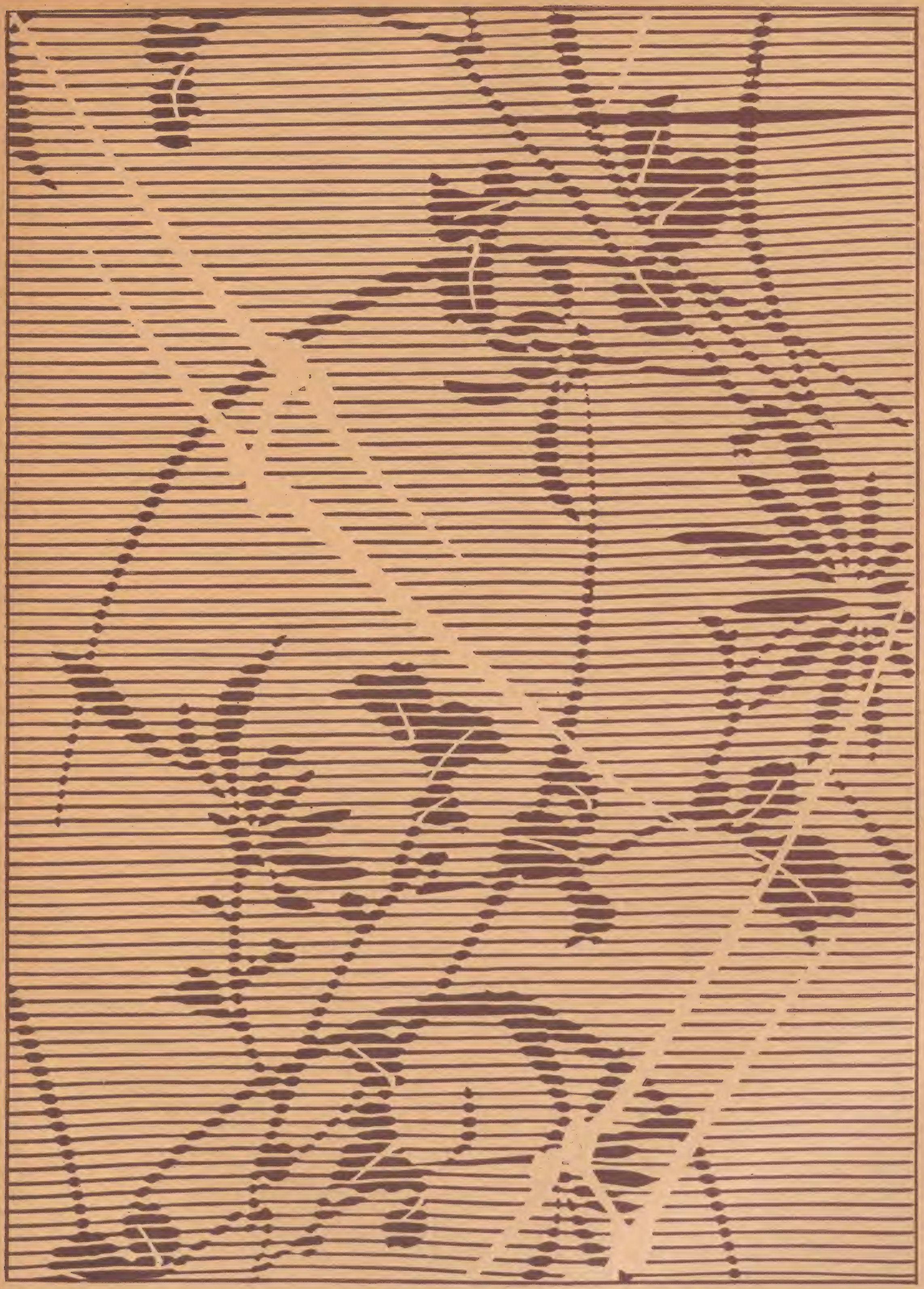

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ED

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Tiré du MIROIR DES BEAUTÉS, par SHUNSHO. 1776.

Grav. impr. par Gillot

Gravé par P. GUTLOT

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OF

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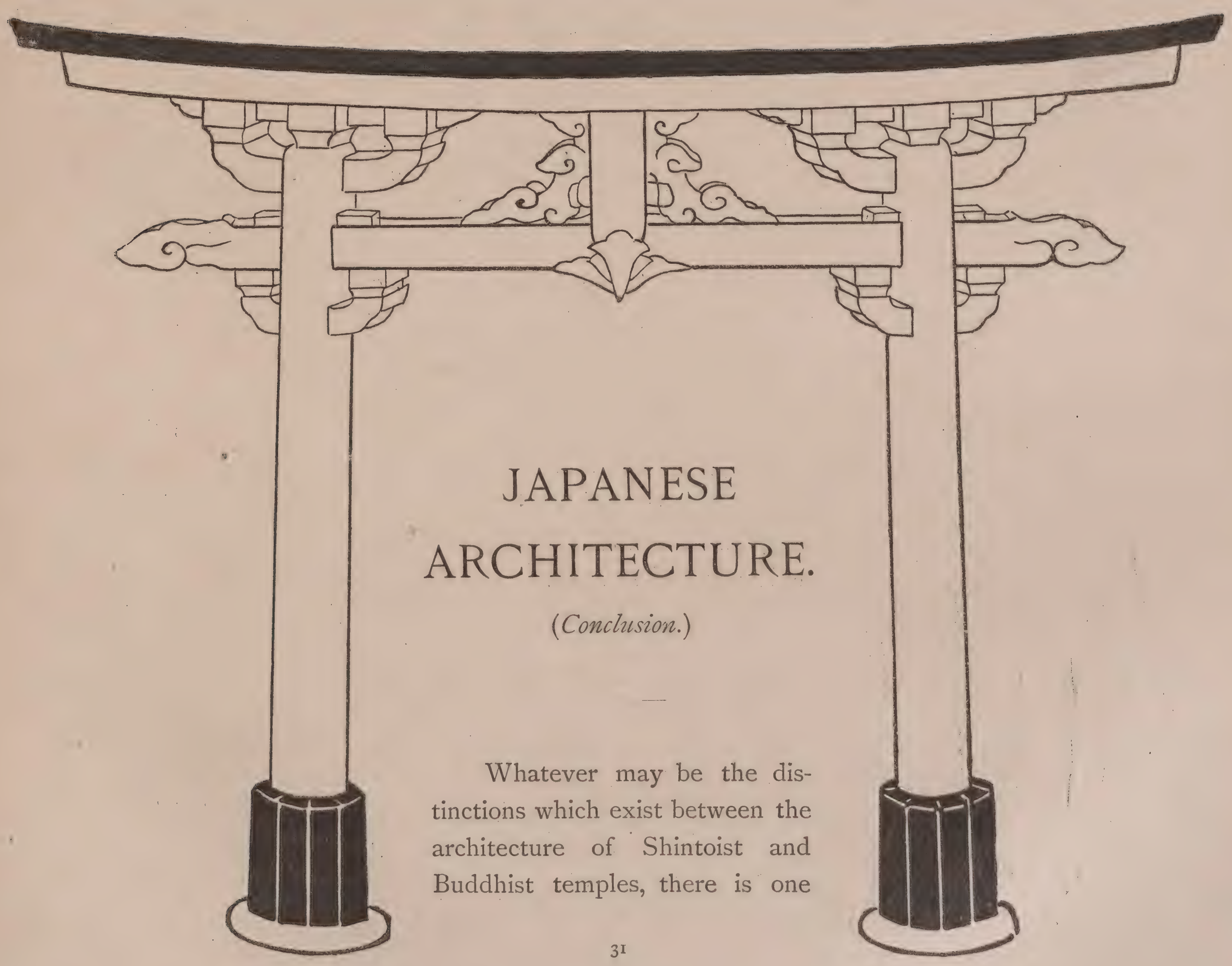


JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE.

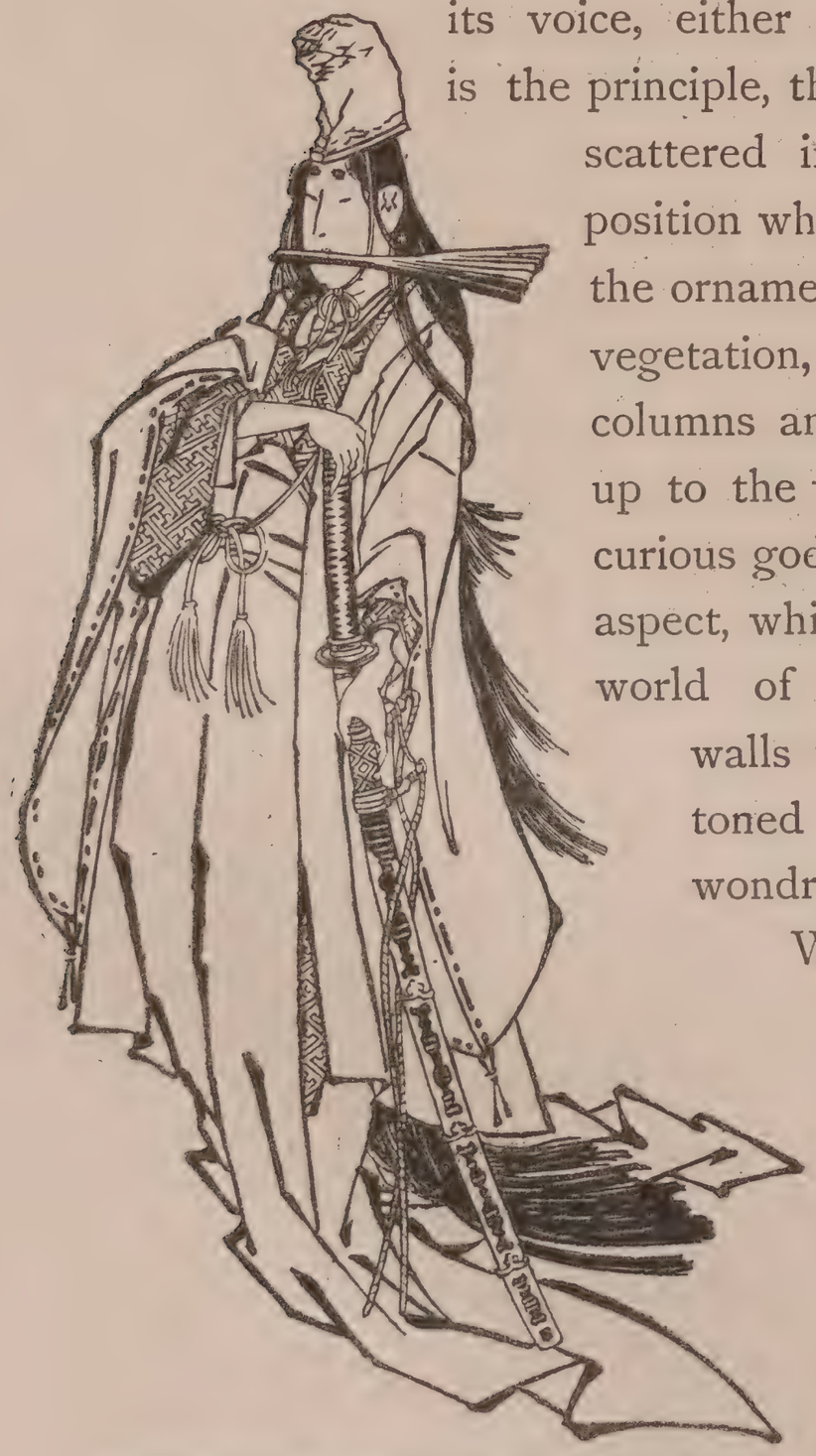
(*Conclusion.*)

Whatever may be the distinctions which exist between the architecture of Shintoist and Buddhist temples, there is one

Temple of Ouyéno at Tokyo.

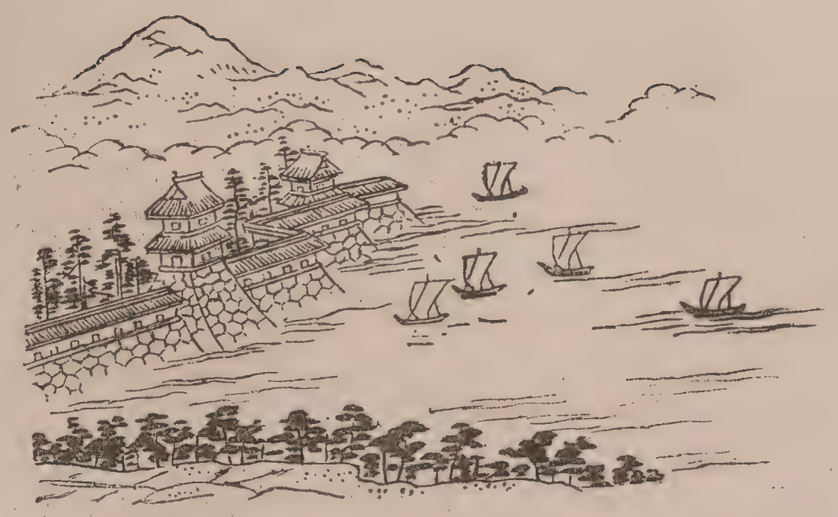
remarkable principle which is common to both, and which holds to the same idea—namely, that the two religions arise from the *rôle* played by man in nature. It is this which gives them so individual an aspect.

While with us a building is an organism having in itself its principle of unity, in Japan an edifice is not considered as an isolated thing completing the harmony of the functions for which it is designed. It is the part of, and must blend itself with, the landscape. With them, a temple is a succession of smaller buildings spread over a vast space, usually on the side of a mountain, each portion dedicated to a virtue of the god of which it is in honour, and all within an enclosure. The forest envelops it in its living foliage—it lends to it the wondrous concert of its voice, either melancholy or loud with anger. It is this which is the principle, the frame, the connecting-link of this architecture so scattered in effect, but in reality submitted to laws of composition which a mystic conception inspires and orders. As for the ornament which covers these temples—as for this luxuriant vegetation, this marvellous show of blooms which covers the columns and the foundations, which runs over the walls and up to the very roof—this decoration which makes a crowd of curious gods to grin from the capitols or the ceilings, strange in aspect, which fills the edifice from top to bottom with a winged world of chimeras, birds, dragons—as for these painted walls where bronze harmonizes with wood that time has toned so exquisitely—we must forego describing their wondrous beauty.



Gidiyo-Assadi, Mistress of Taïrano-Kiyomari. From a Novel illustrated by Hokusai.

What also strikes us is the elegance of the proportions, the great perfection of detail—the walls of lacquers encrusted with precious metals, the carved panels, the finish of which bears witness to a



Bay and Fortress of Awaji, Seïran.

surprising ingenuity. What escapes us is the symbolical meaning of all this grandeur, the signification of this exterior merit which only speaks to our eyes, and to understand which thoroughly one must be a Japanese.

For everything is symbolical in Japan. Symbols, those porticoes which are called "toriis" and which the Shintoists place close to their temples, and visible from a long distance like the Grecian *propylæa*. It is a roost, as the word indicates, and its two bent beams are made in order that the sun, the king of nature, may come like a bird to perch there. Symbols also those beams which surmount all Buddhist temples, and whose rings or added roofs, in number five, seven, or nine (gorin, kurin, &c.), answer to religious attributes. The flowers painted on the pillars are also symbols, for they all have a meaning to the Japanese imagination; as also have the animals so constantly repeated—cranes, tortoises, emblems of longevity and happiness; foxes, elephants, and fish, which latter recall to the people their origin from fishermen. Even the dragons, which are the crest of the Mikado, and are found on all objects for his use, are symbols. Without wishing to still further dilate on the symbolism of Japanese architecture—which is by no means the least curious of its characteristics, and a theme upon which Mr. Dresser* has so well written—I shall limit myself by drawing the attention of my reader to one of the most interesting albums by the well-known Hokusai,† in which the Japanese humorist, amusing himself by tracing the origin and laws of religious conceptions whence arise the principal ornaments employed in his country, arrives at giving this formula of one of the commonest forms of construction, namely, the Portico, whose massive roof is, in a curve, beautiful as it is graceful. Hokusai explains that this form arises from the following idea. The sun, represented by a large circle on a horizontal line, is supported on its right and left by four smaller circles representing the four seasons; from the top of the sun there come concentric lines which join by geometrical combinations to the smaller circles of the seasons; and it is these lines so arrived at which furnish the graceful curve of the portico in question. Has this explanation any historical value, or is it only ingenious and poetical? At any rate, it is enough that it should come from a Japanese artist who does

By Outamaro.

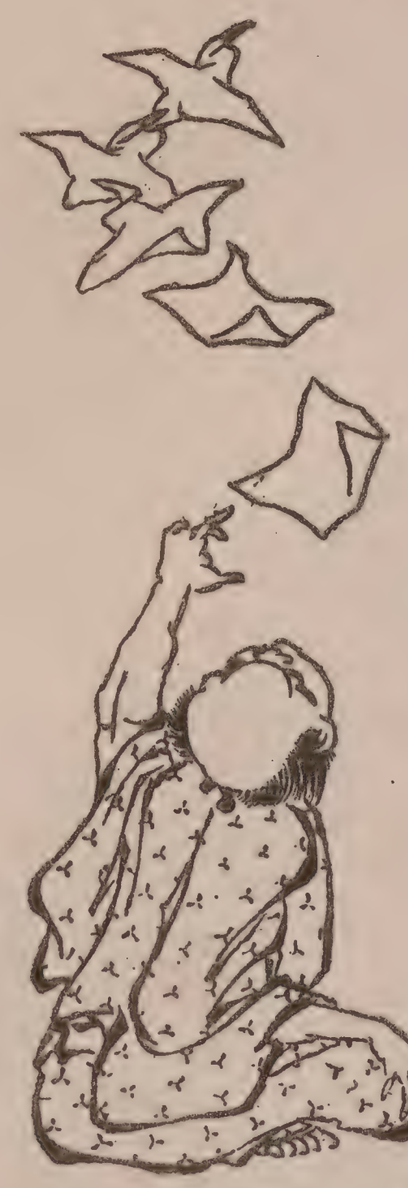
* C. Dresser: *Japan, its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures*, 1882.

† *Sin Hinagata.*

Allegorical personage by Okamura Masenobu (1700).

not limit to that extent his indications of a like nature, in order to prove how strong is the conviction in Japan that architectural forms come more or less from hazy recollections of some ancient symbolism.

But in all this we have only spoken of religious buildings; I scarcely dare to speak of civil architecture, it being hardly represented in Japan except by the tiny houses no more than summer-houses, looking like miniature villas hidden in the verdure of the gardens, and of which one can form a fairly exact idea when looking at kakémonos or lacquered trays representing everyday life. It is true that now we begin to find a town or two with buildings in the European style. The street called Ghinza at Tokio, for instance, has some resemblance to any large French country-town, with heavy buildings of several storeys high, with shops and windows like those in Paris—Grecian columns here completing their tour round the world, and making no pleasant addition to the local colour. The Japanese, in spite of the edicts which force them when they are functionaries to dress up in our clothes, in our scanty jackets and high-crowned hats, are faithful to their tiny houses, where they feel safe in an earthquake—where they sleep secure under the wooden roofs, dried by the suns of a hundred years, and which vibrate to noise like some violin or the stretched skin of a tam-tam. To describe truthfully the appearance of these strange houses—divided into movable compartments by means of paper screens which can be taken down at will like children's toys, and where a European hardly dares to move for fear of doing some damage, so fragile do they seem—one should be able to show briefly the most typical peculiarities of Japanese life. It is colour that gives life to things; and how can one depict a habitation if one does not show its ordinary inhabitants—their costumes, manners, and furniture—their mode of eating and sleeping? Nothing is



A Juggler. From volume x. of Hokusai's *Man-gwa*.

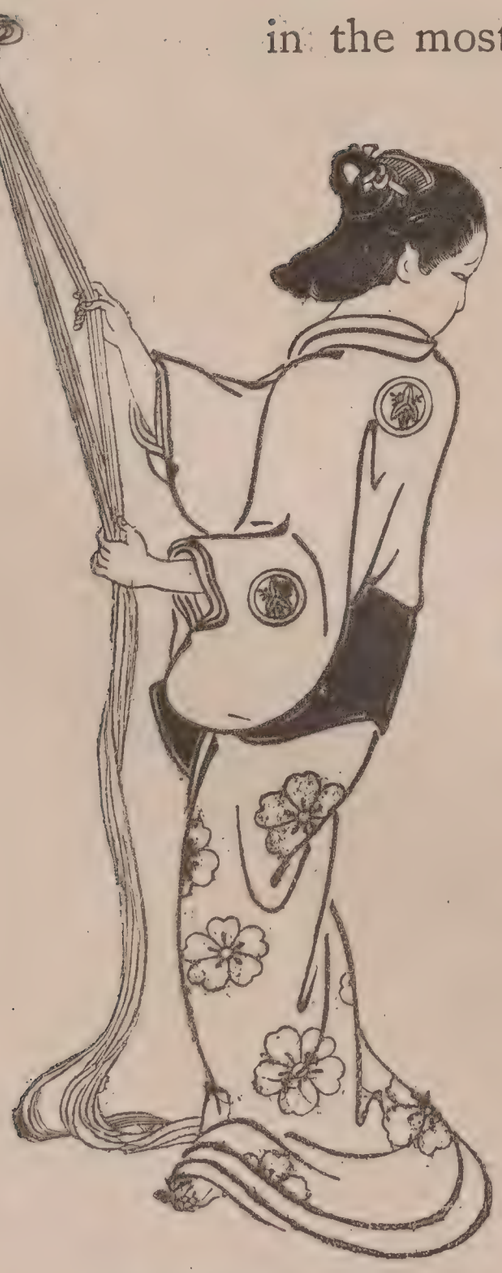
more characteristic than these houses—nothing could more exactly express the manners of the Japanese—that people so active and lively, so eager and sedulous, loving little delicacies and roguish affectations. They are in their element there, with the surroundings made for them agreeing with their desires, which are at once very simple and refined; it is according to their taste for trees, flowers, light, and all the objects of nature—a nature rather curtailed, conventionalized, and seen through a microscope. As for the exterior aspect, it is very much the same in the town as in the country—a house one storey high, plastered outside with a mixture of clay and cut straw, and over this a sort of stucco made of crushed shells; the garden, which forms a frame to it and where the grasshopper makes incessant concert, loud and strong, both by night and day; this garden is a prodigy of tiny and childish devices, but charming nevertheless, with its lilliputian rivers, and its trees stunted by nature—with its dwarf cedars, no higher than a cabbage, and which take the attitude of weary giants—with its toy rocks which form the shelter for tortoises—with its wells surrounded by bamboo plants, families of gold-fish circling in the clear water. When the weather is sufficiently warm twenty or thirty wooden frames are pushed aside in their grooves, and the house is open on all sides; the fresh faces of the charming mousmés appear on the balconies; and the passer-by who is of a curious turn of mind may look on the familiar

Fishing Boats leaving the Bay of Osaka, by Keissa Yeïssen (1835).

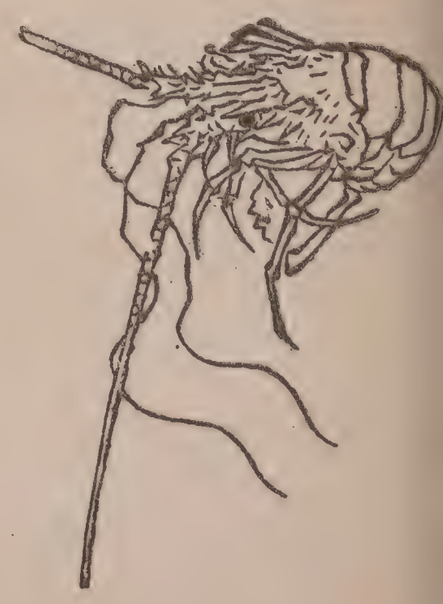
A Ghost. From Hokusai's *Man-gwa*, vol. i.

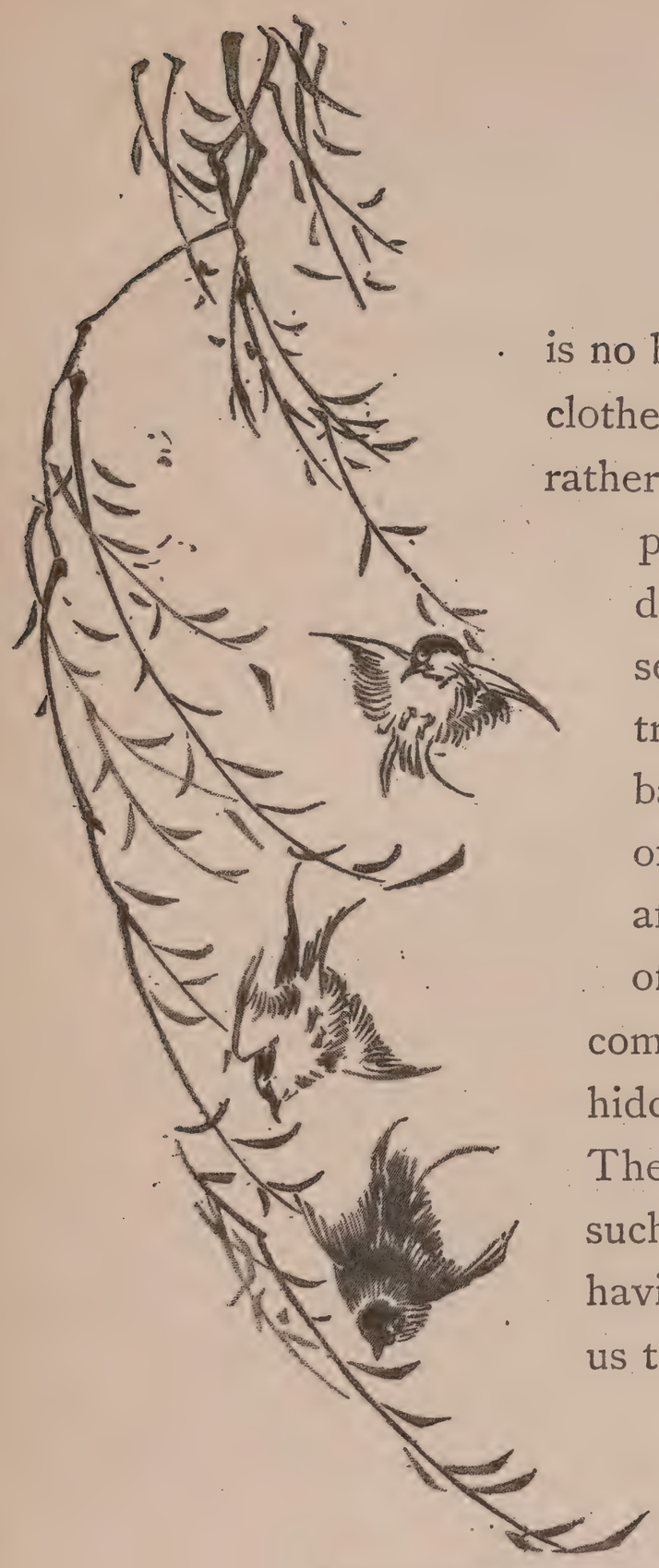
scenes which take place in daily life. In the evening at about five o'clock, the time for bathing, one sees women and children quietly going through their regular toilet. Let us penetrate into the interior of the house—a sight is awaiting us there which will certainly surprise many of us, who think that a Japanese drawing-room is full of an accumulation of curios, bronzes and lacquer, gold embroideries and many-coloured satins. The first impression, on the contrary, that strikes one on entering the rooms on the ground floor, that they are almost entirely bare, and most scrupulously clean; their artistic objects are not displayed upon the walls, but are kept, carefully labled, in a sort of mysterious apartment, whence they are only brought on rare occasions in honour of some distinguised visitor; everything seems fresh and new, as if untouched by human hands; nothing but mats of an unspotted whiteness, and yellow or white wood, kept also perfectly clean by constant washing with soap; perhaps two or three little screens placed here and there. Now and then, in the rooms of the rich, a small bracket on the wall opposite the entrance is seen, and which is called the tokonoba; often also a kakémono is hung here, before which is a beautifully-decorated stand on which rests a grotesque figure of ancient bronze, or perhaps a jar full of flowers most tastefully arranged.

The woodwork has neither paint nor varnish, but it is chosen with the greatest care, and it displays carpenters' work which is unequalled by any nation in the world. The pillars which support the woodwork are varied in the most fantastic manner—some are of a geometrical form, perfect in preciseness; others are artificially bent like the trunks of ancient trees. The walls are formed of sliding frames covered with white paper, which can be entirely removed by pushing them aside in their grooves, so that it is possible to have a separate room in a few moments. If we climb up the wooden staircase, which is like a ladder creaking under one's unshod feet—for in Japanese houses one leaves one's "getas" at the door—leading to the first and only storey, one finds the same simplicity, the same bareness: mats and unpainted wood, no furniture, no visible ornaments. One of the four walls of the room may not be made in paper, and not movable; in it, behind some painted panels—also of paper, but decorated with a design or a sketch in indian-ink—is a wardrobe beautifully constructed for holding clothes. There



By Sukénobu (1750).





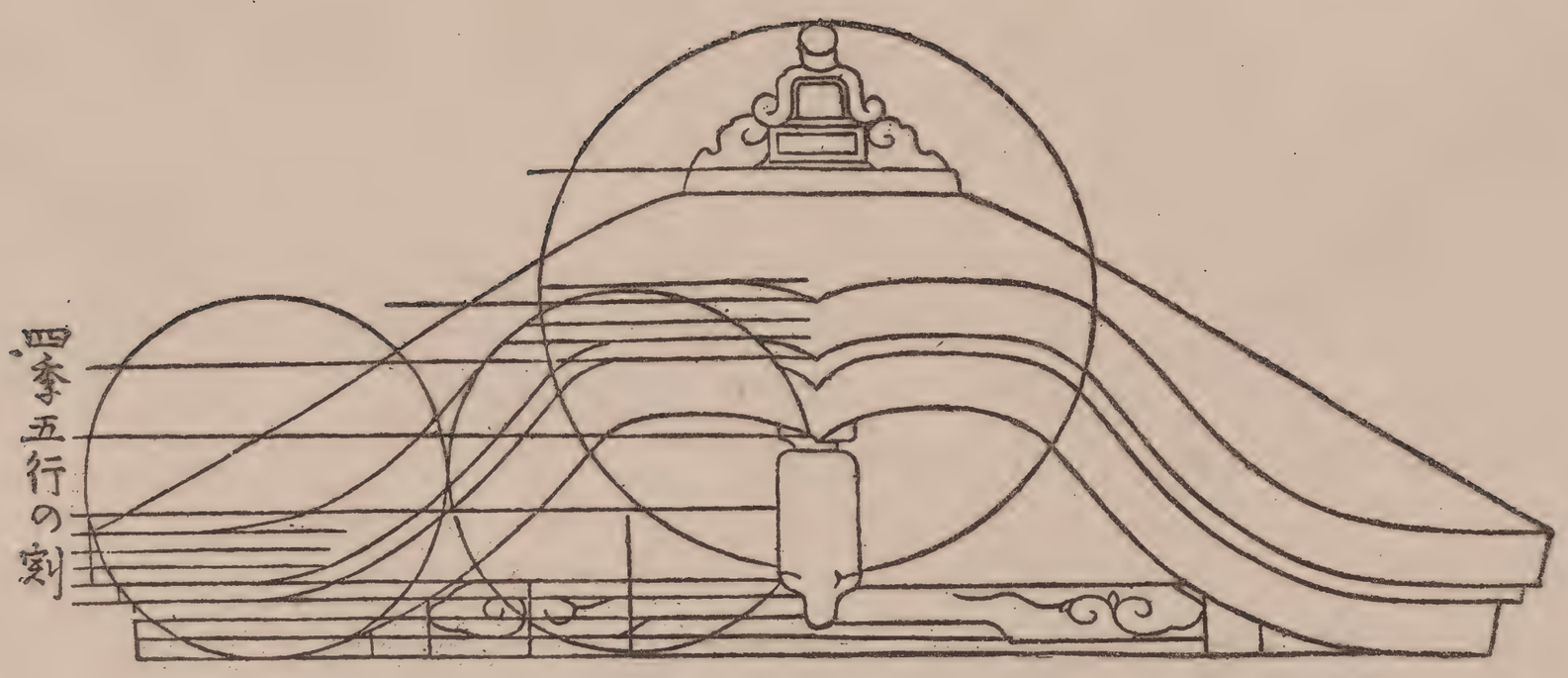
Engraving from an old Envelope for a letter.

is no bed: the Japanese sleep on the mats without taking off their clothes, wrapped up in a quilted coverlet, the neck supported by, or rather fitted into, the hollow in a little mahogany roller, in order to prevent the wondrous head-dress of the Japanese lady being disarranged. There are no tables—they eat off the tatamis; no seats—they squat on the ground. But we must remark this contrast; in the midst of this absence of comfort, of this voluntary bareness, and this elegance of emptiness, luxury exists—a luxury of refinement of the smallest details, and a luxury of incredible affectation. In this way: the wood of the beams, the framing of the panels is in natural wood, looking as if it had just come from the carpenter's plane; but the nails that fasten it are hidden under bronze shields of the most exquisite workmanship. The movable partitions, instead of being furnished with handles such as we should have put, are pierced by small oval holes having the shape of the end of our fingers, and are designed for us to pull them by this means; and these little holes have bronze decorations, which we remark, on close examination, are wonderfully engraved—on this a lady fanning herself, on that a blossoming cherry-branch.

This is Japanese all over: to pay the greatest attention to a miniature work, and to conceal it in an aperture made for insertion of the fingers, which appears only a flaw in the wood of a large frame—all this patient work on a hardly visible accessory, in order to force an exclamation of surprise or to produce an unlooked-for effect. If this is not characteristic, it is at any rate a striking example of the work by which we have become acquainted with this ingenious people, and by which we must learn to understand its architecture and the decoration of its homes.

VICTOR CHAMPIER.

By Issai (1835).


四季五行の刻

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

The Plate FF bears the signature of Tori-i Kiyomitsu, one of the most popular of the painters of the Tori-i group (1750). In our last number, in a notice of the Katsukawas, we gave a specimen of costume, and showed how an artist who inaugurated a new and personal style, perpetuated his fame by founding a dynasty in which all his descendants adopted his patronymic. There is probably no family of this nature which, within the space of a century, has had so numerous a following as that of the Tori-i, the founder of which, Tori-i Kiyonobu, invented in 1695 printing in colours; it may be added that there is no school which is so easily recognisable by its uniformity of treatment and style. Until 1770, the Tori-i devoted themselves almost without exception to the glorification of the theatre and the portraiture of contemporary actors, but many of them showed a personality and an individuality; thus, for instance, Kiyomitsu abandoned the violent dramatic mannerism and gesture in which his predecessors had always thought fit to clothe their personages, and endued his with a soft harmony of line and a calm and placid countenance. He also showed a marked preference for actors who undertook female parts.*

The Figure in the Plate FF is an actor, the celebrated Tomédjuro Nakamura, in the part of the charming Kaïshi, of whom it is said that "she is as fair as the day, as she walks beneath the shade of her nun's hat, which extends over her a radiation of flower-stems, and which in its covering has a whiteness which equals the fresh-fallen snow on the summit of Mount Fuji."

Landscape. From Hokusai's "Thirty-six Views of Fujiyama," † 1820. Many Japanese artists find it impossible to delineate any landscape without inserting somewhere or another in it the classical cone of Fuji. Probably from the earliest moment, when the Japanese attempted to draw upon paper or silk the picturesque details of his country, Fuji's imposing mass exercised a magnetic influence upon him. None appear to have been able to free themselves from this fascination, which can only be properly understood by those who have been privileged with the opportunity of personally experiencing it. Comparable in its majesty to the ancient sovereigns of the land, the offspring of the sun, enthroned in solemn isolation, Fuji rears itself alone, and exercises supremacy over the vast provinces which lie at its feet; like the Mikados too, who hide their august faces from vulgar view behind a transparent veil, the sacred mountain usually envelops its crest in a curtain of clouds. But on lovely autumnal evenings its outline silhouettes itself in gorgeous splendour, and through a prismatic atmosphere, appears in flaming colours, or detaches itself, a magnificent mass from the opalescent depths of the heavens.

It required the audacity of a Hokusai to create a work in which these numberless visions should be perpetuated in a manner and with a strength of execution worthy of their splendour.

---

* In Japan, all the parts are filled by men, who imitate in a wonderful manner feminine gestures and voice. The only exception to this rule is when a theatrical company consists exclusively of girls, who then undertake in a similar way the *rôle* of either sex.

† Fujiyama, a volcano which has been inactive since 1707, is the highest mountain in Japan; its height is 12,450 feet. The word *yama* signifies mountain.

In this volume under notice he has denoted each and all, whether it be the mountain as it appears like an enormous mass close at hand, or rising up on the furthest horizon, as if seen through a reversed telescope, almost indistinguishable in the vast panorama.

The view before us is taken from a promontory or an island height which has had to be scaled in order to discover the snowy peak of the celebrated mountain. At the spectator's feet extends the tranquil surface of Lake Sowa (province of Shinano), framed in verdant hills, which shelter at their base fishing villages half buried in trees. To the left a castle, erected on a narrow spit of land, encroaches on the water's domain. It is worthy of remark that the painter has cleverly contrived to place us somewhat to the rear of the extremity of the eminence, whence the view unfolds itself. By this ingenious artifice the eye is first struck by the important mass in the foreground, with the result that the rest of the picture is thrown back and all the distances are accentuated.

Plate BG. "Street Scene on New Year's Day," taken from Hokusai's *Sō-gwa* (1820). All sorts and conditions of men wade through a slush of melting snow. Here is the elegant samurai, carefully wrapped up, and there a young girl of prepossessing appearance, each on their way to pay a ceremonial call, whilst porters hurry about, hidden under their enormous round hats. But the most characteristic of the figures are the two *manzai* who strut along in the foreground of the picture. These two inseparables pass, according to ancient custom, during the first months of the year, from house to house, giving their well-known performance. Welcomed everywhere with their jests and buffooneries, they accept with the same good grace a load of presents at the noble's castle and the copper cash offered by the inhabitant of the lowly cottage.

The personage of important mien who walks in front is the dancer, ready to display his serio-comical poses or his full and measured gestures, whilst the fat, good-natured soul which follows him will frisk around, to the sound of his hour-glass-shaped tambourine which he has for the moment placed on his back under the protection of a cloth.

The Plate GE contains two studies of the Convolvulus *Ipomœna* (Jap. *Assaguo*), taken from a treatise in three volumes (dated 1813), which are devoted entirely to the different varieties of this plant. It enjoys, in common with the cherry-flower and the chrysanthemum, the distinction of having publications concerning it specially illustrated by artists of renown. In the work now under review more than a hundred varieties are depicted, as being noticeable either for the difference of their flowers or foliage. For this genus affects the most varied forms and colours; the former are long, short, or twisted, its edges are smooth or jagged in a variety of ways, its colour is sometimes of a uniform green or bronze, at others speckled with yellow or spotted with white, like one of those which is depicted here. What is most interesting is that in all these drawings there is a total absence of that dryness which is inherent in all our botanic treatises. The engraving and its printing are both artistic, and the tones almost as harmonious as in Nature. Every part of the plant is modelled to perfection, and is redolent of suppleness and grace. In order to avoid the semblance of monotony, many of the works to which we refer represent in succession a cutting and the entire plant; in other cases the stem is placed in a bronze vase or a porcelain jardinière, and these again take interesting and unexpected forms. And lastly, invention holds its own beside the most scrupulous fidelity to

Nature both in drawing and in observation. So great is the determination to invest with interest a subject which always runs the risk of being monotonous.

Plate BJ. Bronze duck on a lotus leaf (eighteenth century). Artist unknown. A practical opening in the back of the bird allows of the introduction of the ash-tray upon which the incense or the odoriferous wood is lighted, and whence the perfume passes through holes in the lid formed by raising of the feathers. The sculptor, in creating this object, endeavoured to transform his inanimate mass into a living and moving being. He restrained himself from being led into the puerile idea of endowing his work with even a particle of that conventional grace which is termed "prettiness." He determined to perpetuate in all its heaviness the awkward attitude and shambling gait which characterise this humble denizen of the poultry-yard. The modelling of the head and breast is remarkably powerful.

Plate CI. This seventeenth-century bronze vase of dark patina has less of Japanese character than any subject which we have hitherto illustrated. Its form did not originate in Nature, nor was its conception a sudden impulse derived from a simple and thoughtless line. One at once recognises the Chinese influence in its severity, its archaicness and its architectural character. In this instance a finikin grace gives way to solidity, and elegance to a robustness of contour, united with great firmness in the details of the ornamentation. The contrast will be great when a fragile, transitory flower takes its place in this vase above the sombre note of venerable bronze, the emblem of indestructibility.

In the illustration CH we at once return to thorough Japanese Art. The subject which occupies the upper portion is of porcelain lightly celadonised, and comes from a factory which belonged, at the end of the last century, to the Prince of Nabéshima, Daimio of the Province of Hizen. This little utensil is a water-jar (midzu-iré), serving the purpose of wetting the stone upon which the Chinese ink is rubbed for writing or painting. It represents a folded lotus leaf, upon which a frog vainly attempts to disengage himself from the grasp of a small crab which has seized him by the foot. The stem of the leaf affords a commodious handle whereby the water with which it has been filled (by plunging into a vessel of larger dimensions) can be poured out upon the stone. A minute hole is always left on the upper part of objects of this kind so as to allow of the pressure necessary for the flow of the water and the escape of the air whilst the article is being filled. The lower piece is modelled in terra-cotta, of a grey tone, and was probably made at Tokyo within the last half century. It is an *okimono*, that is to say, "a thing to be placed," or "ornament," which serves no useful purpose. The artist has delighted in reproducing this familiar picture of a group of cats, in which all the intensity of the most touching maternal love is revealed. Compare the disquietude and watchfulness depicted in the attitude and look of the mother at the approach of a stranger, and the trustful serenity of her two children.

Plate GA. Fragment of woven silk. The idea of this composition most certainly originated in a mind which had carefully contemplated the stirring life which on a hot summer's day reigns over a piece of still water carpeted with a mossy bottom. Butterflies and dragon-flies

indulge in their frolics, and in grazing the water's surface trace upon it, in a thousand tangled streaks, the gyratory movements of their giddy evolutions. The many kinds of Lemna (Jap. Oukikousa), a plant indigenous to the marshes, have scattered their gay red seedlings, whilst mixed with these may be seen the delicate fronds of the water Ranunculus.

We may add in connection with this, that although it may occasionally happen that the exact significance of a detail may not be apparent, or a mistake be made in its interpretation, we must never doubt that a logical meaning, apparent or hidden, most certainly attaches to even the most insignificant parts of a Japanese composition, if they be purely ornamental, the only exception being in the case of certain geometric designs which serve habitually the purpose of a foundation only.

The Plate CE shows an example of this exception in the central frieze, whilst in the arrangement at the lower portion of the page the arabesque pattern serves as a basis for a design of running water which carries with it sprays of the cherry in full bloom. The upper design consists of a flight of a thousand small birds, which are drawn this, that, and every way.

The Plate DD confronts us with a much more striking composition; the plant of the calabash gourd (*Sagena vulgaris;* Jap. Hiotan), letting its serpentine tendrils laden with flowers and fruits wander hither and thither, apparently without any restraint, over a chequered ground, which originated probably in an idea taken from the walls formed of large stones which sometimes surround the Daimios properties. The Hiotan, which is much cultivated in China, and in India whence it originated, holds an important place in the domestic life of the Japanese. Its skin used as a bottle is the faithful travelling companion of the pilgrims, of whom a large number are to be seen everywhere—visiting places oftentimes as much for their beauty of situation as for the purpose of offering up devotions at the feet of their tutelary deity; it also, when suspended against the walls, serves as the most popular of flower vases; as such it is at times used in its natural state, at others decorated with a rich ornamentation of lacquer, imitating the leafed tendrils of the plant. The gourd has also afforded numberless varieties of models to the bronzists, ceramists, and basket-makers.

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Part V. will contain an Article on "Jeweller's Work," by M. L. Falize.

鳥居清滿画

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BJ

H. Guérard.

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

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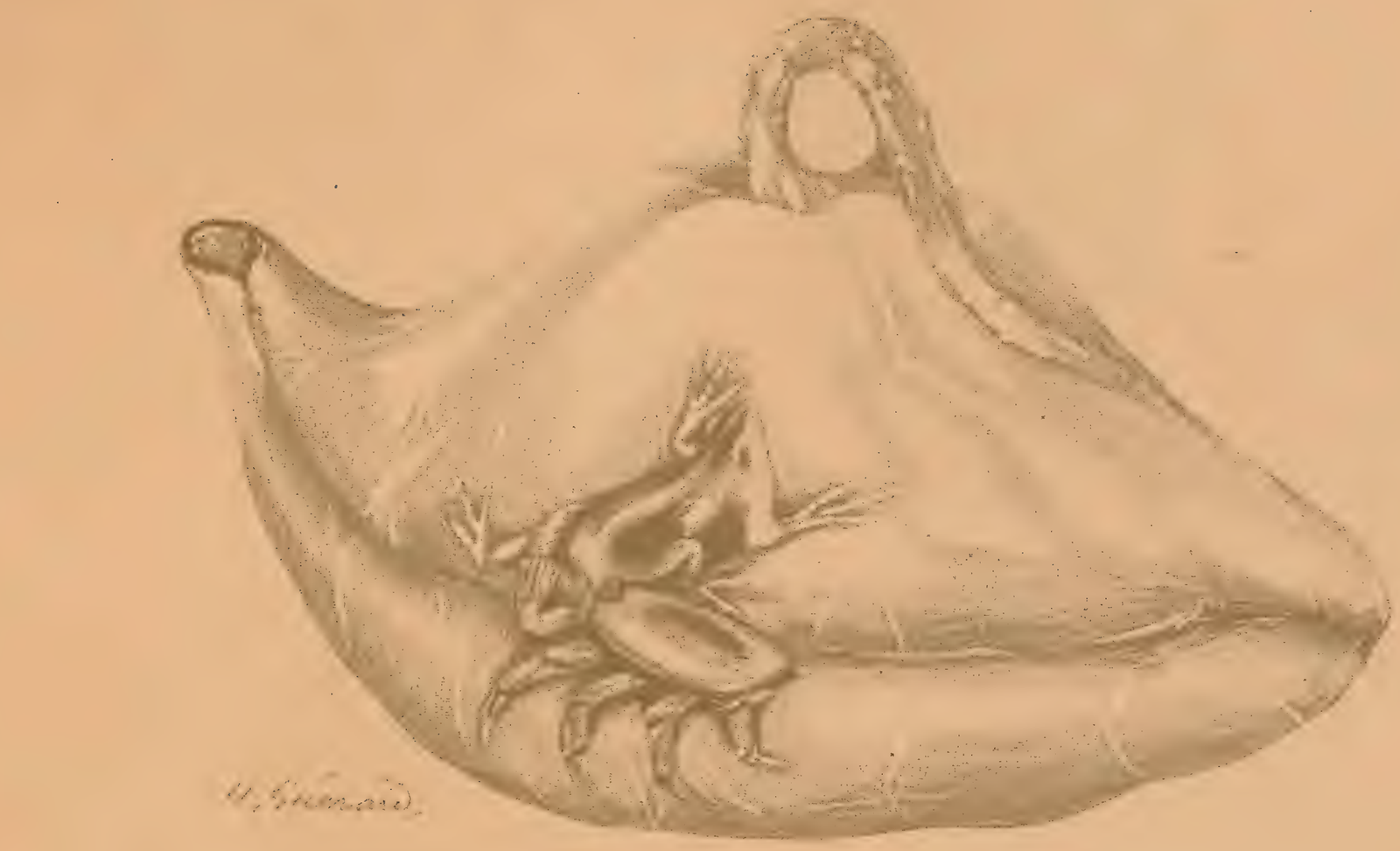

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Tiré des 36 VUES DU FOUDJI-YAMA, par HOKOUSAI. 1820.

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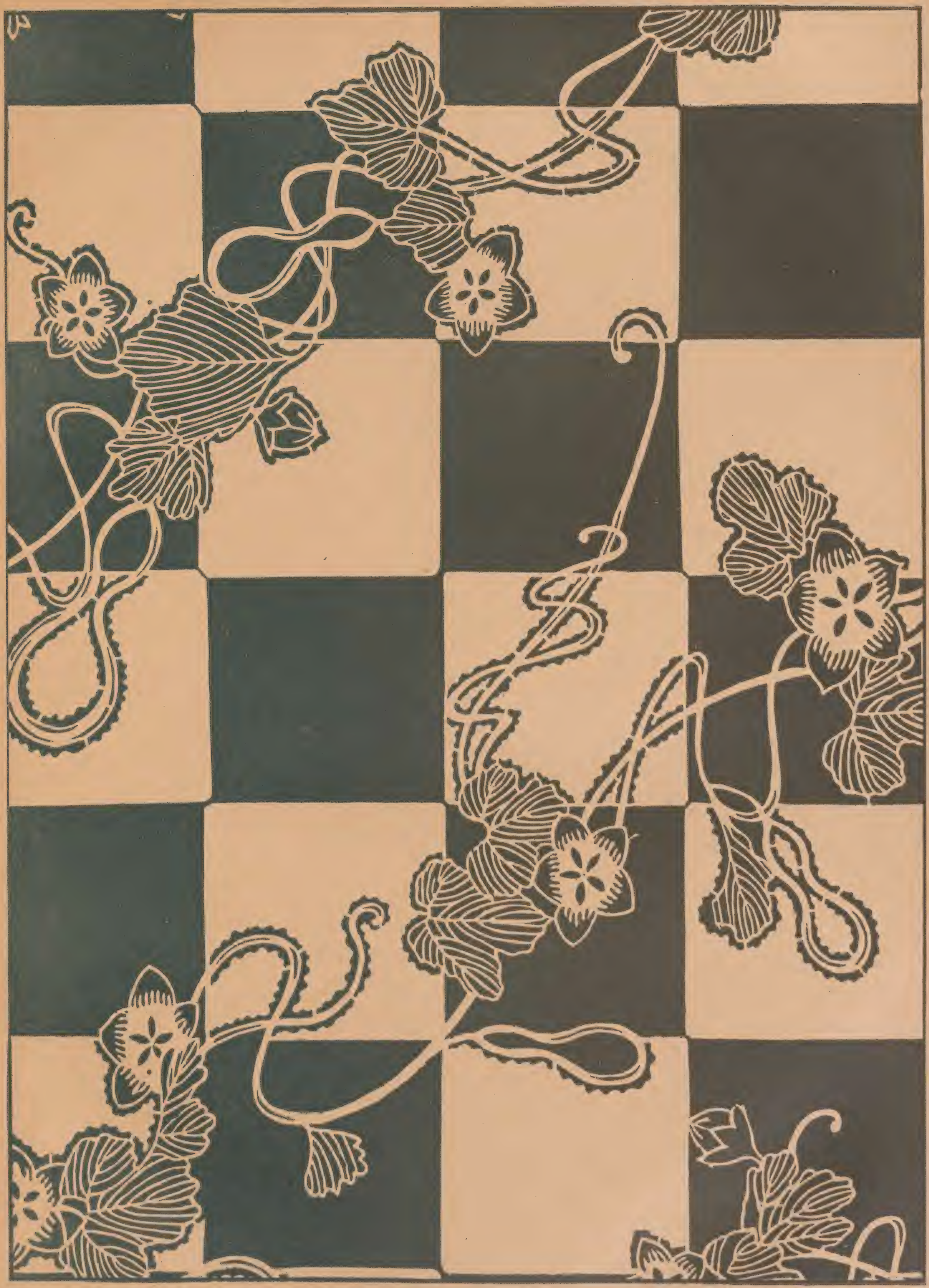

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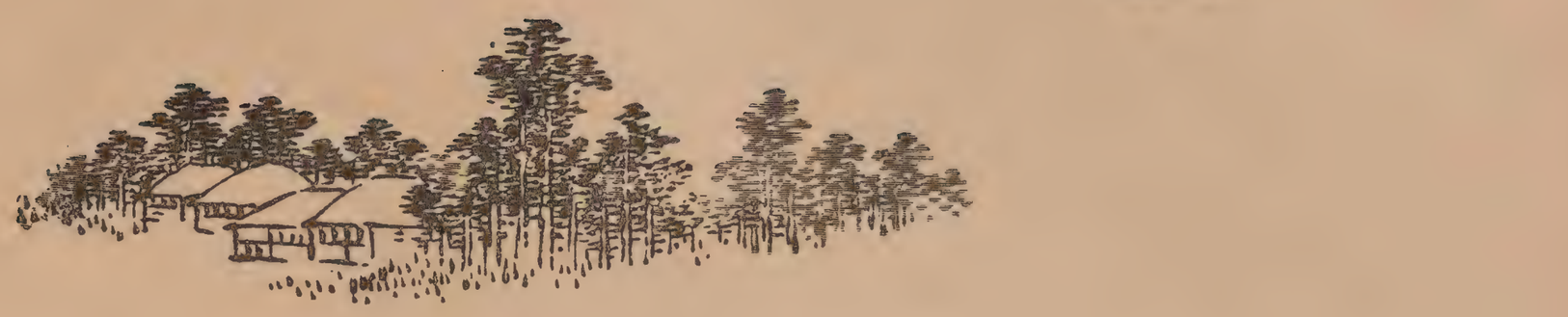

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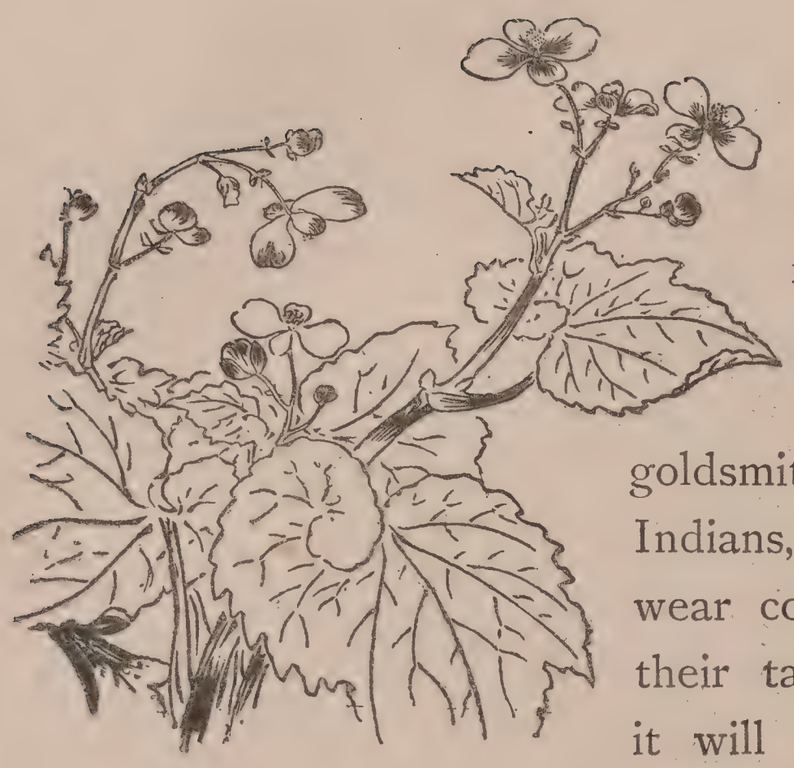
The Article in No. 6 will be by M. Edmond de Goncourt.

JEWELLERY.

In approaching the Art of Japan, it is not my intention to touch upon its origin or its marvels, or to ascertain the laws upon which it is founded. A goldsmith



myself, I shall confine myself to a short dissertation on the Art of that craft as practised in Japan.

Japan, correctly speaking, has neither the art of the goldsmith nor of the jeweller. The males do not, like the Indians, deck themselves out in jewellery, nor do the females wear collars or bracelets; no vessels of silver are found upon their tables, nor vases of gold upon their altars. From this it will be seen that no comparison can be formed between them and us in this respect, and it would be puerile to attempt to assign a preference to the work of either. Originated for dissimilar wants, governed by other laws, this branch of Art followed, in Japan, traditions of so different a nature that it is impossible to compare either the form, the decoration, or the style with anything Western.

This, notwithstanding, it is impossible not to admire in Japanese jewellery, or rather in the products of the worker in metals, a taste in the arrangement, a science in colouring, and a manual dexterity.

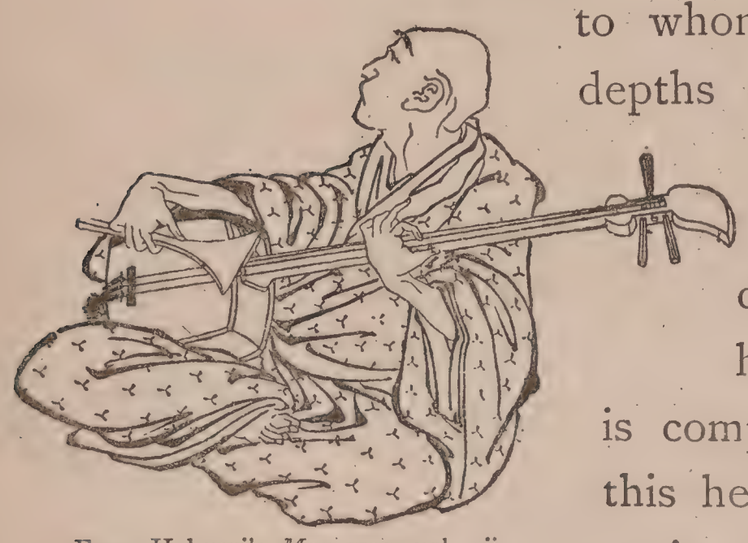
The forms are not derived, as in ours of the old world, from an architectural fount; if vases occasionally appear to be constructed on certain definite rules, they then most certainly have a Chinese or Corean origin. The Japanese model is always supple; inspired by a flower, a fruit, something in nature, it has never adapted itself to rule or to measurement by the compass, but remains free, picturesque, and daring.

The love of gold or silver, the desire to impart to an object richness and magnificence, has never bound the workman to the exclusive use of those two metals. To him they are merely two colours upon his palette, upon which he has also ranged iron, copper, lead, pewter, and brass, and these he uses like a painter, mixing and combining his tints, and varying his effects through the use of alloys in

Daimio's Son out walking, by Kiyonaga.

a way we have never yet dared to do.

Thus, then, we see this workman artist under no obligation to confine his efforts to hammering out a silver flagon, or shaping a gold ring, but free to model to his liking his mass of metal, and to paint it in all the colours which that metal offers to him. He constructs his model in wax; it is perchance a rugged trunk of a tree which two hundred years of growth and wear have delved into deep furrows, whose powerful roots grip the ground, which has deep cavities burrowed by generations of insects, which is overgrown with moss or other parasites, some old, some of infantine freshness. All this our artist copies with the patient care of a workman to whom time is of no value. He installs himself in the depths of the forest before his model; he studies it as a botanist, he gets to understand, love, and admire it. He changes nothing, arranges nothing—or rather disarranges nothing—of what he considers that nature has set out so well, and then, when his wax model is complete to his satisfaction, he coats it with a fine earth; this he overlays in small pieces, and allows to dry, adding to it wherever necessary, until he has made of it a mould which covers his model with a solid envelopment. He then heats the whole at a small fire in a specially constructed oven; the wax melts and runs out of the air holes, and the mould remains entire, with its previously constructed core of earth.

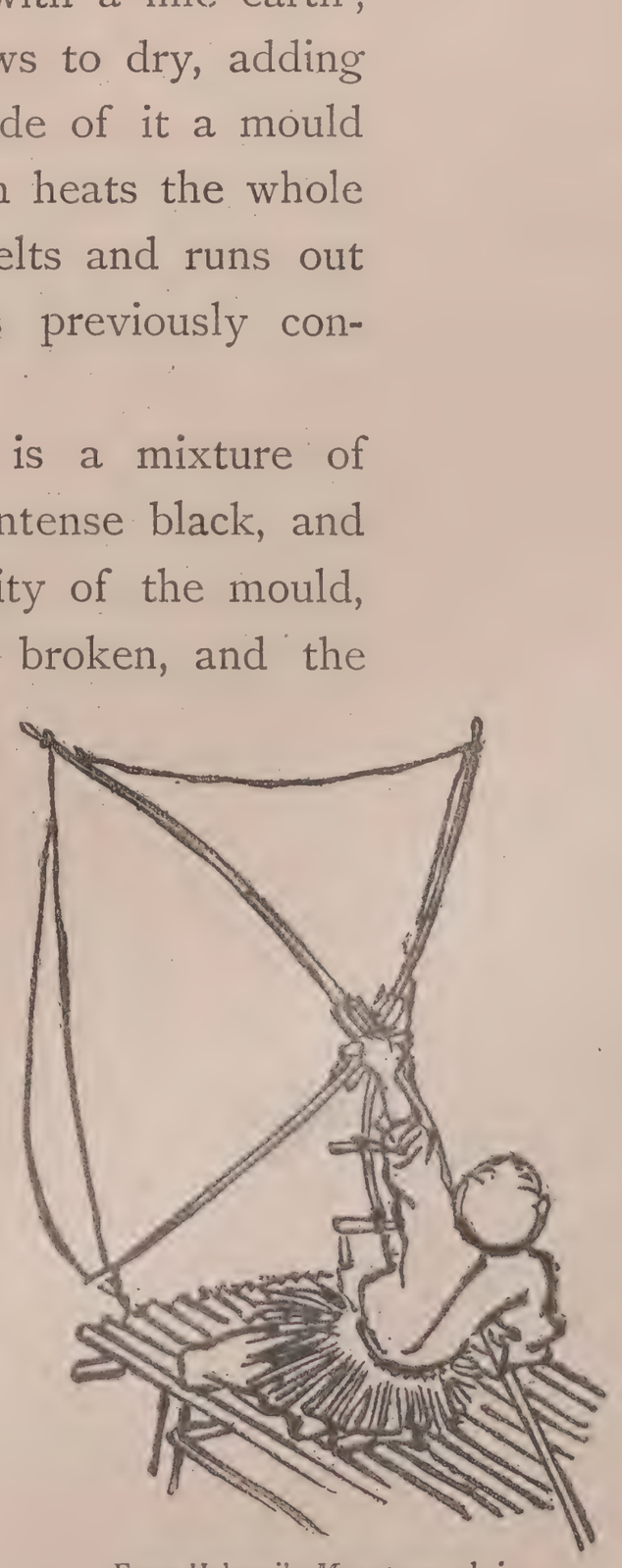


From Hokusai's *Man-gwa*, vol. xii.

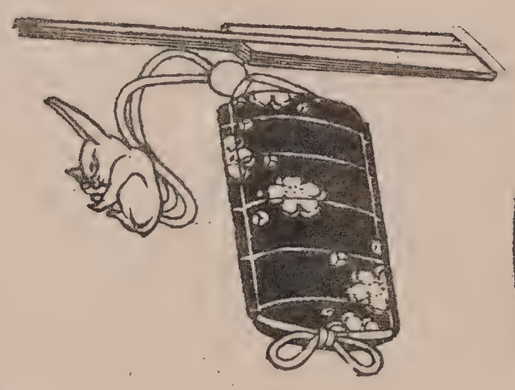
Then our artist makes his alloy of shakudo, which is a mixture of copper and gold; this will subsequently take a patina of intense black, and of a transparent polish; the metal is poured into the cavity of the mould, and fills it in every part; the earthen envelope is then broken, and the rugged tree trunk appears in all its metallic beauty.

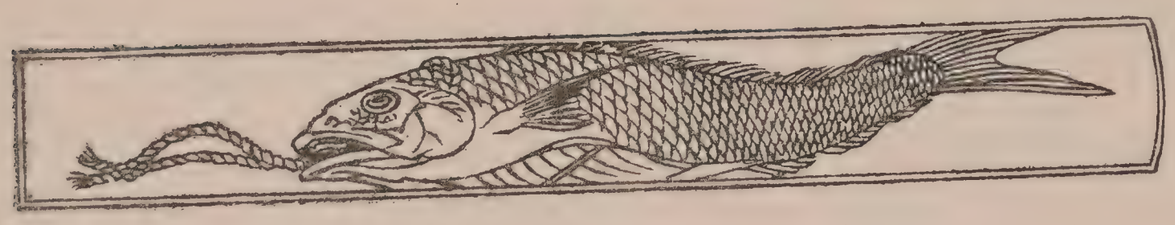
Our artist now sets to work again, squatting on the ground before his tree model which sits so quietly to him; shaded by a big parasol, his legs bent under him, he holds the block of bronze between his knees. And now watch him whilst he chisels, files, polishes, returns again and again to the smallest details of his work,

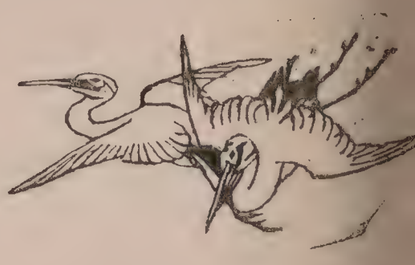
Issaï, vol. v.

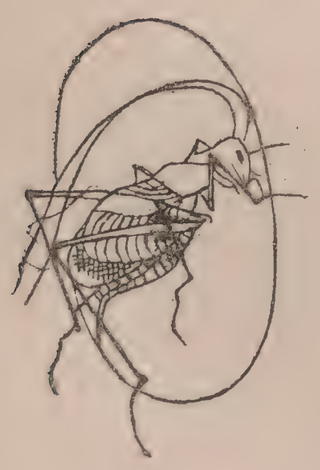


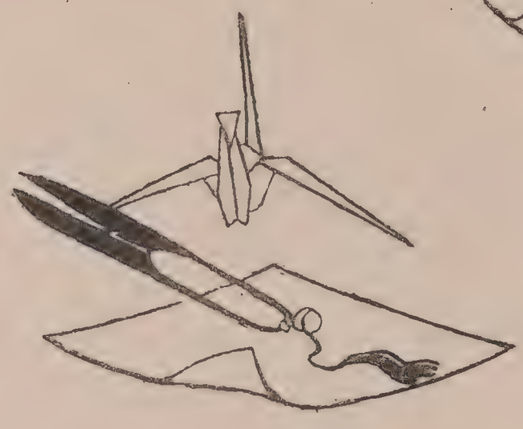
From Hokusai's *Man-gwa*, vol. i.





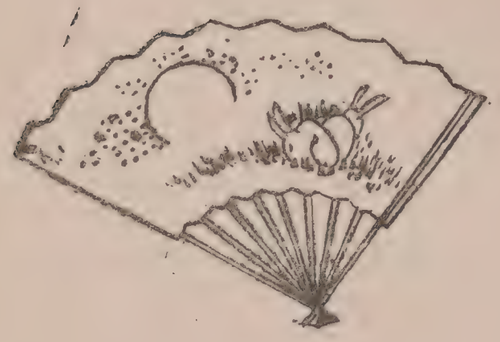






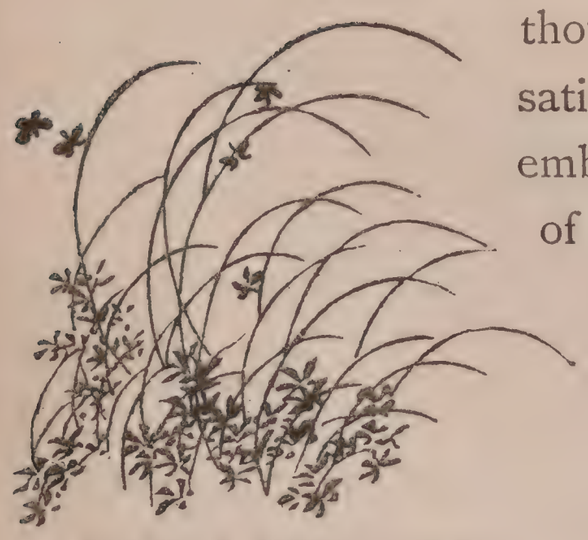
MODELS FOR ENGRAVERS.

Ideas for kanémonós (clasps to tobacco-pouches) and for sword furniture, by Katsukawa Issaï.



From vol. i. Hokusai's *Man-gwa*.

and when he has finished it, watch him as he caresses it and rejoices that he has discovered so many beauties, and has been aroused to so much enthusiasm. But even then his task is incomplete; when he considers that his bronze cast is finished, then he commences to cover it with moss and verdure, or he furrows up with deep lines the fibres of a root; this he encrusts either in small planes or in delicate veins with pieces of *shinshin* (yellow copper), *shido* (violet copper), or *shibuichi* (an alloy of six parts of copper and four of silver); then he hollows out the contours of the leaves, and carves out small veneers of green gold which he will inlay, hammer, and chisel, until the whole grows like a picture under an artist's brush, and his sculpture appears, to a near-sighted person, painted with the fineness of a miniature, and with the delicacy of flesh. Here we see a whole tribe of ants issuing from a hole in the tree; their bodies are of gold or iron, their legs of extreme tenuity; endowed with life, they bustle and hurry about their accustomed duties. A golden, enamelled butterfly, whose delicate wings of mother-of-pearl give out reflections as deep and changeable as those of the original, has posed itself upon a white flower of silver, variegated with threads of gold and blue enamel. A curious red spot is visible at the base of the tree; it is a fungus, striped and spotted, admirable in its modelling; the patient artist has filed and polished it, and then subjected it to several coatings of red lac, each of which have had to be carefully and slowly dried, repolished, recoated, pricked over with gold dust. And now only (after having gone over all his work a hundred times, which never to his mind will compare with the original, after having clothed it with a coating of adherent silver-leaf, which is itself a mass of admirable design in niello-work, after having baked it in sulphur, polished it with the finest powder, tempered it in a vinegar formed from plums, fired it with infinite precautions, exposing this part, protecting that, after a thousand caresses, and a thousand retouches) does the artist place his signature upon it, satisfied with his work; then he encloses it first in a covering of embroidered silk which fits it like a garment, and then in a casing of deftly-joined wood. And now at last we see the completed work, the product of many months of assiduous, impassioned,



From vol. ii. Hokusai's *Man-gwa*.

From Hokkei's *Man-gwa.*

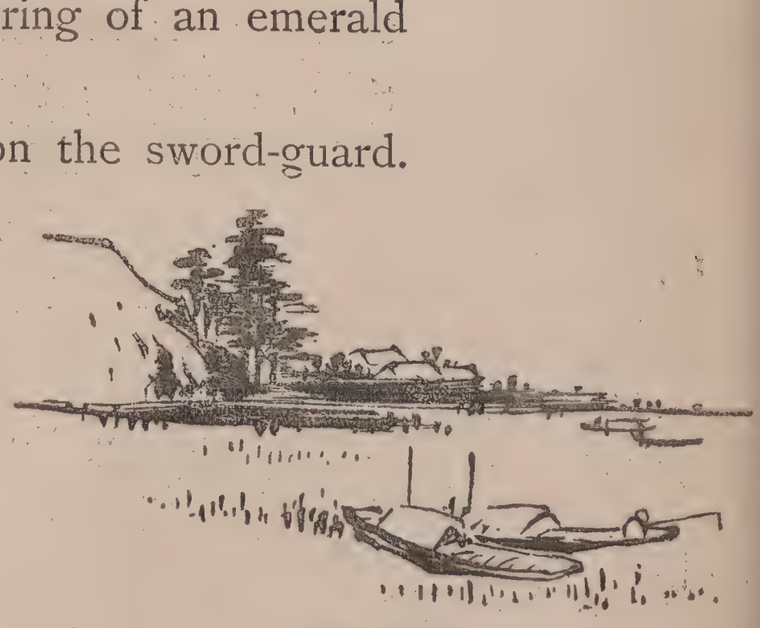
happy toil, passed in communion with an out-of-the-way corner of nature, with its imaginative dreamings, its enchanting life, its delights for the man at once a sculptor, painter, and mechanic.

Can this be termed a piece of jewellery? Who is the man who will identify himself here with similar models and work? I. have dwelt at some length upon this patient, determined, capable, poet of the tool, in his open-air studio. For why? Because it is a picture of the workman of old, as he once lived and worked. We cannot, unfortunately, now come across his fellows, for they do not exist. Japan, in its process of civilizing itself, has ceased to produce anything except the articles required for exportation to Western bazaars. Fortunately, however, this great artist of the past has left traditions, sleight-of-hand secrets of the craft, receipts for alloys, methods of creating patinas and of decoration which are still in vogue in the workshops of Kyōto, Osaka, Tōkyo, and Nagoya.

It is fortunate that as nowadays the secret is lost of creating a sword-guard similar to those by these renowned artists, there still remains to us the originals of those powerful and charming productions, where the iron is pierced, incised, carved out, tortured into the form of monsters, interlaced into the shape of birds, insects, or flowers, or modelled into a landscape forming a picture no bigger than a child's hand but containing within itself a complete poem.

Not only is the whole completely modelled, but a damascening of fine gold overruns it, drawing the outlines of feather or scale, and streaking with its colours of warm or cool gold or silver, the rugged iron basis. Perchance a leaf encrusted with green or red attracts with the colouring of an emerald or ruby.

And all this ornamentation was not lavished only on the sword-guard. Even in the interlacings of the cord upon the hilt were to be found the *menuki*, made of the same metal as the rest of the furniture; these would represent either some extraordinary animals, or a god, or perchance a singing



Issaï, vol. ii.

woman, with her musical instrument, her robe all encrusted with silver, and her hair of wondrous black metal, and all chased and chiselled under the magnifying glass. Then again there is the pommel of the sword, and the *kodzuka* and *kogai*, all replete with ornamentation! But it is needless to dwell upon these, for probably the majority of those who read these lines know of or possess collections of these wonderful things. And to all these must be added the engraved pipes, the *kanemonos*, or pouch ornaments, the buttons, and the metal netsukés which rival those in wood and ivory. Besides, the engravings of these things, which will from time to time appear in these pages, will tell far more than any written description.

It is now twenty years since, filled with admiration at the first specimens I saw of an art which appeared to me as a tempting novelty and an unexplained problem, I wished at once to set off to Japan in order to study on the spot this unknown industry. I fondly hoped to be able to carry thence some of their patient and talented workmen in order to make them instructors for our own. I nursed this wise project for several months, and dreamt of all that there was to be found in a country which had yielded us so little as yet. My desire, however, had to contend against a will that was stronger than my own. I did not go, and I have elsewhere explained how I consoled myself by borrowing from Japanese designs the idea of *cloisonné* enamels which I made, and which has since spread widely. If I had been able to obey the instinct which prompted me, I should have hoped to have been the Apostle of Japan, its Prophet, and a capable translator of its Art. Knowing what I did then, I should have been the first foreigner to examine the Art at its fountain head, with the workman in his pristine condition. I need not speak of the fortune which I feel sure I could have easily made; I only regret the loss of a journey which would have been full of artistic and novel interest.

Since then I have shown the way to others; I have told and written of all that I have seen, and what they and I have done. But impelled by the necessities of rapid production, neither they nor I have approached the disheartening perfection of those masters who are acquainted with every metallic alloy, who found, beat out, chisel, engrave, encrust, damascene, enamel, lacquer, polish, patinize, set, and carve with a subtlety of invention, a taste for decoration, a variety of motives, a harmony of colours, and a

sense of form, and who are, in the opinion of our profession, artist workmen whose productions in metal are simply adorable.

I believe that it will be worth while to examine the subject yet closer, and this I hope soon to do in these columns from a purely industrial and special point of view.

L. FALIZE.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

PART V.

We have hitherto had some hesitation in presenting to the public certain productions of a very special kind, because they deviated too decidedly from those hereditary forms out of which Eastern æstheticism is built up. At the risk of being accused of a certain pusillanimity we feared to fly in the face of preconceived ideas. However, come what may, we owe it to our readers not to allow this omission in the survey of the different families of Japanese art which we have undertaken to unfold to exist any longer. For it is especially due to those whose natural taste is only moderately well disposed towards any liberty which is attempted to be taken with well defined art precepts. Perhaps it may induce such to judge more leniently those peculiarities of Art which at present they are tempted to despise on account of their extreme novelty, and of a strangeness which is always disconcerting to well established notions; perhaps, too, they may assent to examine with greater toleration works which must appeal to them on account of their evident sincerity. Who can tell, perhaps even they may be lead to admit that certain doctrines, which to-day they term revolutionary, may have their *raison d'être*, nay, even a practical application elsewhere than at the other side of the world? However this may be, it will not do to prejudge the case before all the evidence has been produced.

The Plate GB appears under the wing of the explanation just furnished. It represents a flight of tomtits (*Zasterops Japonica*), and is taken from the *Sui Séki Gwafu*, a volume published at Naniva (the ancient name for Osaka) in 1830. The work contains studies of flowers, birds, &c., all remarkable for a simplicity of execution markedly defined, everything being drawn in lines and dashes applied in bold, daring strokes of the brush, which reduce everything to its most concise form.

The author of the work *Sui Séki* was a disciple of an impressionist school at Kyōto, whose programme was to show before aught else what were the essential characteristics of the subject, to discover the most striking points, and to render these so clearly and legibly that they should at once be communicated to others, and thus by a permissible license to push to a point of exaggeration what there is to say, and to leave out altogether those parts which are

considered to be unnecessary for the demonstration, and which would in the opinion of the artist only weaken the effect.*

We may, perhaps, grudge the absence of a thousand details, but the Japanese dilettanti whose mind has been long accustomed to this method of workmanship is not so exacting; he is aware that the artist wished to present such and such a thing in such and such a manner, and if he finds this done he is perfectly satisfied, nay more, it elicits from him a greater sense of admiration than a minutely elaborate work would have done. In the composition before us the artist explains the subject in the following legend: "A flight of tomtits leaving their nest with much fluttering of wings at daybreak."

The Plate of Yoshivara by Utamaro is taken from the *Seiro Nenjiu Gioji*, published in three volumes in 1803.

A similar scene, interpreted by Katsugawa Shunsho (Mirror of Beauties) was given in our third part, to the descriptive text of which we would refer for an explanation of the subject. It appeared tc us that it would be interesting to compare these two similar compositions treated at different dates, so that an estimate may be formed of the variety of style and a parallelism after a kind established.

Two things at once strike one in connection with feminine portraiture as produced by the Japanese; the first that, however much sameness, amounting often to monotony, one artist imparts to his faces and figures, there is a vast difference in this respect in the types assumed by different artists. Each of them—we are now of course speaking only of those who have shown inventiveness—created a type of his own with which he rested satisfied and which he reproduced at will. The *raison d'être* of this peculiarity lies in certain fashions under the influence of which the painter was carried away, when he was not, as was oftentimes the case, the originator of them. It must be remembered that fashion did not confine itself, as with other nations, to simply altering the mode of draping, or of doing the hair. In this eccentric country, where so many other customs follow hieratic laws which admit of no change, the fashion imposes itself, by a strange aberration, even upon the physiognomy of womankind, and endeavours to model it upon the lines of whatever conventional style of beauty happens to be in vogue at the time. It sets to work to transform artificially even the shape of the face and the form and dimensions of the lips or the eyes. In certain cases the razor intervened, and the pencil stepped in to displace the eyebrows from their natural position; vermilion and even gold sometimes brought out by their brilliance certain parts only of the mouth; all the resources of cosmetics were pressed into the service, and far from hiding these processes, the young coquettes revelled in the effects of this their holiday adornment, just as much as they enjoyed on high days putting on their best dresses. If it was necessary, therefore, for painters with such restriction and limitation

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* This school was undoubtedly founded upon the work of *Korin*, a celebrated lacquerist of the 17th–18th century, who formulated these principles of Art (which were in complete harmony with Japanese temperament, but remained latent for a long period) in the most masterly manner.

to make great efforts to compass their ideal, they nevertheless had every facility for exaggerating the system to its extremest limits. One is not therefore surprised to perceive in pictures of Japanese customs, great divergences of type, which are very different from those to which one is habituated in real life even amongst different classes of the population.

Once these singular practices are admitted, one cannot but recognize that woman as she has been imagined by Kitagawa Utamaro, is in every respect most seductive, and that the model he has given to us is perhaps the one with the most affinity to the aristocracy of the Japanese nation.

Utamaro is never common; he displays a method which is always new and unexpected in the grouping of his personages, which in themselves are full of life and movement, and he shows great talent in the disposition of his accessories. Was it not, for instance, a happy audacity to present, as he has done here, a number of figures seen through the bars of the open screen? The building faces the street whose liveliness is pictured by the presence of a quantity of passers-by whose upper portions only are shown. The man to the right hides his face so that he may not be recognised whilst carrying on a conversation with the young girls; he is quite indifferent to the sallies of two *manzai** who are endeavouring to join a young elegant who turns towards them.

The whole volume is inspired by Utamaro's characteristic elegance, which is accompanied by admirable technical perfection.

The Plate GJ, also by Utamaro, shows the talent of this artist under an entirely different aspect.

If he produced an immense majority of subjects where womankind plays the principal part, as for instance in her varied attributions of lover, wife, or young mother, or in those scenes filled with personages, as in the plate of Yoshivara, it was in order to meet the demand which arose from every quarter—even from China, if we are to believe contemporary historians. We do not hesitate to affirm that if we had been fortunate enough to be a contemporary of Utamaro we should have been much less exclusive; for some productions of an entirely different character, and of which, unfortunately, examples are very rare, make us regret profoundly the taste for specialities which then existed. A work in two volumes on birds, and two others of flowers, insects and reptiles, are real *chefs d'œuvre* of their kind.

It is from the last named of these two works, the *Yéhon Mushiyérabi* (book of insects) which appeared in 1788 that the drawing of a pumpkin which we reproduce here is taken, and which gives but an incomplete idea of the quality of the book, which we shall hope very shortly to endorse by other extracts. Our plate to-day shows, fastened to the stalk of the plant, one of the numerous varieties of grasshopper—that musical vagabond of which similar ones in myriads fill the air of the country with a terribly strident concert, produced by the incessant friction of their attenuated legs.

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* See Part 3.

Almost invariably, a short stanza accompanies the original engraving, and almost always the imagination emphasises the outward form of the subject by a sentimental note, of a dreamy or philosophic turn. "Little laughing one," it says, "do not let your song be heard too freely everywhere, for there are walls which have ears."

The Plate DE, taken from the first volume of the *Man-gwa* of Hokusai, transports us into the very heart of stirring popular life. Hokusai was born in its midst, and there passed the whole of his long and laborious existence. A plebeian by birth, it was in painting the plebs that his power of observation gave itself the freest rein.

If we pass in review the numerous figures which, on this page initiate us into the daily life of the masses of a Japanese city, we find, commencing at the left panel, two diners, of whom one is at work swallowing a lengthy thread of a species of macaroni, whilst his neighbour to the right indulges in a beatific vision of his forthcoming ample ration of *saké*,* which he is warming at a stove and which will shortly moisten his repast. After passing behind the back of a brave confectioner philosophically seated on the pavement of the street, and offering for sale his small cream cakes, we encounter a group composed of a numerous family, seated in a circle, and celebrating the funeral rites of a deceased friend. The priest, in the centre, strikes with a hammer on a metal plate, which acts as a noisy knell and forms an accompaniment to the monotonous chant in the refrain of which he is assisted by the whole company, who meanwhile pass from hand to hand the beads of a huge rosary. This concert would afford little pleasure to any but the ear of a Japanese, but it is given with the excellent intention of procuring for the deceased a moment's gratification before he is escorted to his last home, and also with the hope that it will invoke for his soul divine favours. Further on two wrestlers, on either side of the umpire, make their customary salutation before commencing their bout, and an embroiderer is at work over his frame. Then we have an assiduous reader lying in a sufficiently nonchalant attitude, beside a scene which depicts the priest in the old legend seeing with surprise his kettle transformed into a badger.

The other half of the sheet is devoted principally to the employment of artisans, boat-builders," makers of blocks for wood-engravers, dressing or carving delicately the wood: all are working in feverish haste. At the lower portion of the sheet a peripatetic oil-merchant is selling his ware, whilst a letter-carrier bears over his shoulder a yoke upon which are suspended his tall quadrangular box and his lantern. The series closes with a type which is very common in Japan, namely, one of the blind men who for the most part follow the occupation of rubbers, and who, either singly or in company, traverse the street spite of all its obstruction with a confident gait. They always carry a whistle, whose harsh sound, well-known to all the inhabitants, is a request to them to afford a free passage.

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* A spirit distilled from rice.

These are only a very few of the numerous sketches with which the *Man-gwa* makes us familiar, and it is all contained within the narrow confines of a leaf which one would imagine had been torn out of a pocket-book.

The Plate HJ introduces us to another work of Hokusai's, of which it forms one page; that is the *Santaï Gwafu*, in one volume (1816), a collection of figures, plants and animals. The idea of the work is somewhat dissimilar to that of the *Man-gwa*, for it is framed upon a more methodical classification of subjects. This sheet, for instance, shows us studies of four different varieties of the Chinese Iris family, of which one is a specimen of the Iris properly so called. The execution of this plate is commendable for its large, simple, and free treatment, which gives with perfect clearness the elegance of the plant.

The Plates DB, EB, and the sheet with the Blue Butterflies, offer specimens of industrial designs. The motive of the first is taken from the perpendicular or transverse fibres of which the texture of wood is composed. The second shows a pattern of alternating chrysanthemum flowers entangled amidst bamboo shoots, thrown upon a shield of rose-shaped design, the idea of which may have been obtained from snow-flakes as seen under the microscope. Lastly, the sheet with the butterflies is a complex composition, undoubtedly inspired by the sight of a stream leaping over rocks on the side of a flower-covered mountain slope.

Of the Plate HE little need be said. The three vases date from the eighteenth century, and they are given here in continuation of the series of models which will serve to illustrate the study of lines.

Plate HC. Four sword guards. We have already sufficiently demonstrated the perfection which the Japanese exhibit in the reproduction of natural objects with all the accompanying conditions of life and movement. But this extreme conscientiousness applied to the faithful imitation of things has oftentimes put persons on the wrong scent as to the real disposition of an art which in reality has far higher aspirations; for in that case, in admiring the marvellous fidelity of the object and its correctness when compared with nature itself, one fails to discover, or overlooks the fact that it is a composition which in every particular is an emanation from the brain and the hand of an artist of talent.

The guard composed of mice, which will be found on the upper portion of Plate HC, furnishes a conclusive proof of this hypothesis. One would at first sight see only that each of these small rodents has been drawn to the life in all its varying attitudes at once so sharp and supple. And yet it is impossible to gainsay the fact that invention reigns supreme in this small piece, where the gift of observation has only been the handmaid of an art which was perfected through a consummate talent for composition. The mice, which gambol or curl themselves up in accordance with the refinements of the composition,

are each made of a different metal, so as to offer to the eye a variety of tones, and to compose that key of colour upon which Mons. Falize has so ably discoursed in the chapter at the commencement of this number. They are made of shakudo, gold, silver, shibuichi and red bronze. Inlays of various metals add to the effect, give an accent of life to the eyes and of relief to the fine hairs in their whiskers. The guard bears no signature.

The guard which shows a chimera seated on a pedestal and appearing to support himself on the central piece, as if it were an heraldic shield, comes, according to the signature upon it, from the hand of Umétada, the celebrated armourer of the sixteenth century. It is decorated with encrustations of gold representing spots on the back of the beast, and imitating wood veining on the pedestal which supports it.

The third guard, which illustrates a flight of *chidori* or sea-swallows, a bird very common in Japan, is made of shibuichi, the eyes being of minute inlaid points of gold. The work is remarkable for its suppleness and softness, resembling a wax cast; and the style is in imitation of that which Korin created in the interpretation which he gave of the forms of these birds. The compositions of Korin have now become so popular that many artists evidently think involuntarily of him in some of his favourite compositions. Thus, for instance, many never draw these chidori except in this particular form, to which the name of Korin no Chidori * has been applied. This piece is signed by Hirochika, who was an artist of the eighteenth century.

The fourth guard consists of a tiger, whose tail is impressed into the service of forming the circular band round the guard. A branch of bamboo completes the composition. The tiger is Buddhistic, and is often drawn crouching in a bamboo brake from the typhoon, showing the powerlessness of the king of beasts to withstand its fury, and this is evidently the motive here. The guard is of pierced iron encrusted with gold. It is signed "Ikkin," and the lettering states that it is after a design of Masayoshi, an artist of the early part of the nineteenth century.

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* See the note on Korin, p. 52.

Collection BING

Tiré du « YOSHIVARA. » par OUTAMARO. Fin du XVIIIe siècle.

H.J.

Gravé par J. B. Guillot

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

DESSIN pour l'impression sur étoffe. XIXe siècle.

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

Grav. impr. par GILLOT

A TRAVELLING WRITING-SET,

MADE BY ONE OF THE FORTY-SEVEN RONINS.

One winter afternoon, some years ago, I happened to pay M. Bing a visit just as he was having a consignment of goods from Japan unpacked. Among many small things already gathered together on a lacquer tray there was a small portable writing-set, called in Japanese *yataté* (arrow-holder), which consisted of a little case hardly larger than a stick of barley-sugar, containing the badger's-hair brush for writing, and a tiny box in which is enclosed a sort of sponge of rabbit's-hair soaked in indian-ink. These quaint little objects, each made of two pieces of bamboo, had upon them representations of children playing, drawn in black upon the yellowish drab colour of the natural wood. There was nothing in any way unusual about

Yadsuama, one of the forty-seven Ronins, by Kuniyoshi.

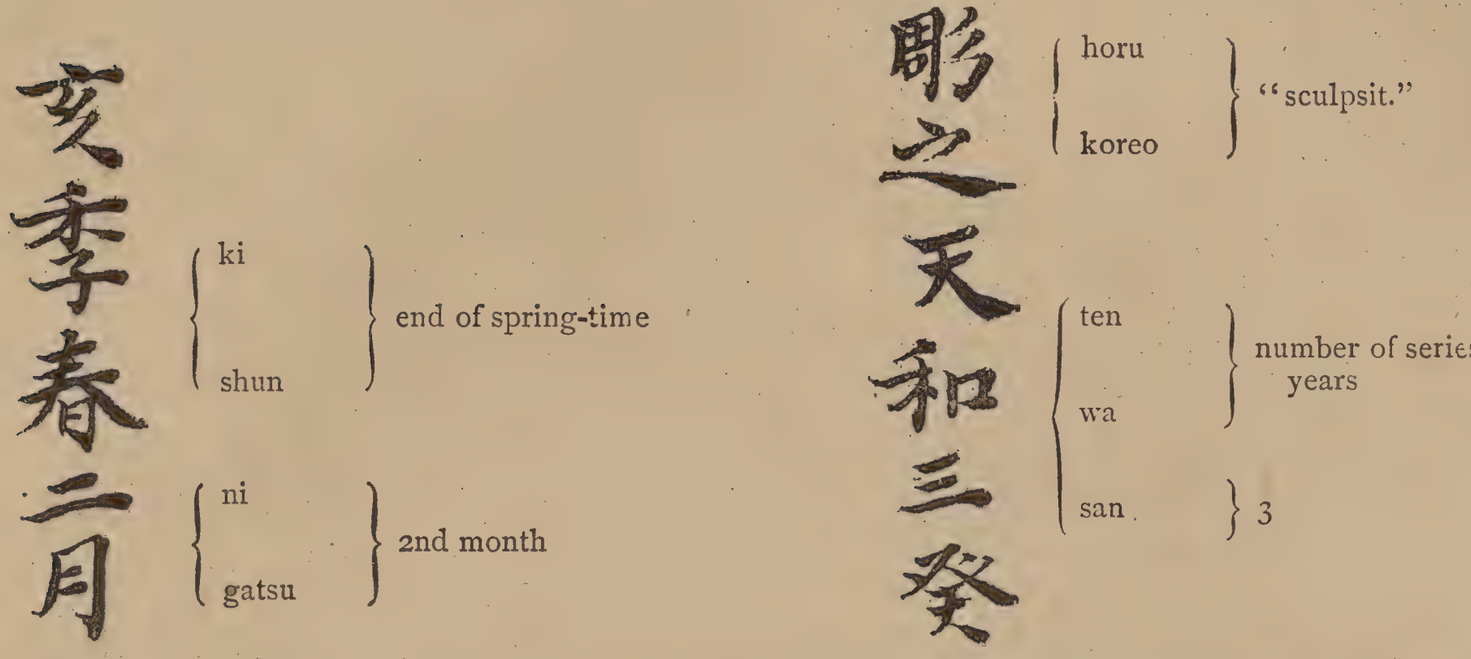
the childish games, but somehow the little set seemed to me to have the appearance of an object of use in bygone times, and a long inscription engraved on the box, and one of those very undisguised mends seen in objects of value in Japan, doubly confirmed my ideas.

I offered a price which was not accepted, so, with no little disappointment, I left the writing-set, having all the time that feeling of regret one so constantly has when sacrificing some fascinating object. However, in the evening, I was seized with so great a desire to possess the toy that next day I returned *chez* M. Bing.

Alas! it had already been sold to a well-known collector of foreign curios, who, however, in the course of a year or so, tired of his collection of Oriental objects, and, when they were dispersed, I again came across the writing-set at the Frères Sichel's, whence I at last secured it.

The poor little thing remained in my house some time, but little noticed, until at last Mr. Otsouka, a Japanese, recognised that it was a work of the seventeenth century; but no one in the world had the least suspicion that it was the work of any illustrious hand. At last, one day, M. Hayashi, as he was going through my collection, discovered the writing-set in a drawer. I saw his fingers trembling with excitement as if he were touching some precious relic; at the same time he remarked to me, "Do you know that you have here a great curiosity—an object made by one of the forty-seven Ronins?" And, tearing a leaf from a pocket-book he had with him, he directly translated the inscription on the box, as follows:—

大高	o / taka	family name of the Ronin.
信清	nobu / kiyo	Christian name of the Ronin.
赤穂	aka / o	name of the master of the forty-seven Ronins.
臣	shin	subject.



Which translation may be put thus:—"Carved by Otoka Nobukiyo, subject of Prince Akao, in 1683, at the end of spring-time."*

Without doubt, then, this little writing-set, this tiny toy, was made by a vassal of Prince Akao—by one of the forty-seven heroes who devoted themselves till death to the cause of avenging their lord and master—by one of those men whose memory has become a form of religion in Japan; in that country where they worship chivalry and valour, and where, according to M. Hayashi, of all our European literature only the plays of Shakespeare and the tragedy of *Le Cid*, by Corneille, are considered worthy of attention.

A curious fact this, in the history of the human race, that this great act of devotion, accomplished in feudal times by a family of vassals, should be, for two centuries after, celebrated in the art, drama, and literature of Japan.

A Daimio of the name of Takumi-no-Kami, charged with a message from the Mikado to the Court of Yeddo, was deeply insulted by Kotsuké,† one of the great functionaries of the Shogun.

It is against the law to draw the sword within the walls of the palace, and in doing so the risk is run of death and the confiscation of property. Takumi was master of himself in spite of a first offence; but at the second he could no longer contain himself, and rushed upon his enemy, who, being but slightly wounded, was able to escape.

Takumi was condemned to disembowel himself, and his family were reduced to poverty, and his retainers fell to the level of Ronins—rogues and vagabonds, according to the Japanese expression. But Kuranosuké, the chief councillor of the Daimio, and forty-six Samurai attached to his service, had

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* The date of the making of the object, if it is correct—the Prince of Akao having been executed in 1690—seems to indicate that the little writing-set was manufactured before Otoka was a Ronin and a merchant of bamboo articles; but, according to the custom in Japan, people who had no idea of becoming professional artists carved netsukés to amuse themselves, and so Otoka, as a merchant later on, may have made profit by the amusement of his younger days.

† *Tales of Old Japan*. A. Mitford. Macmillan, 1871.

sworn to avenge their master, and this vow once made, these men, to calm the suspicions of Kotsuké, who had them watched by his spies at Kyōto, separated themselves, and went to various towns disguised as artizans of various trades.

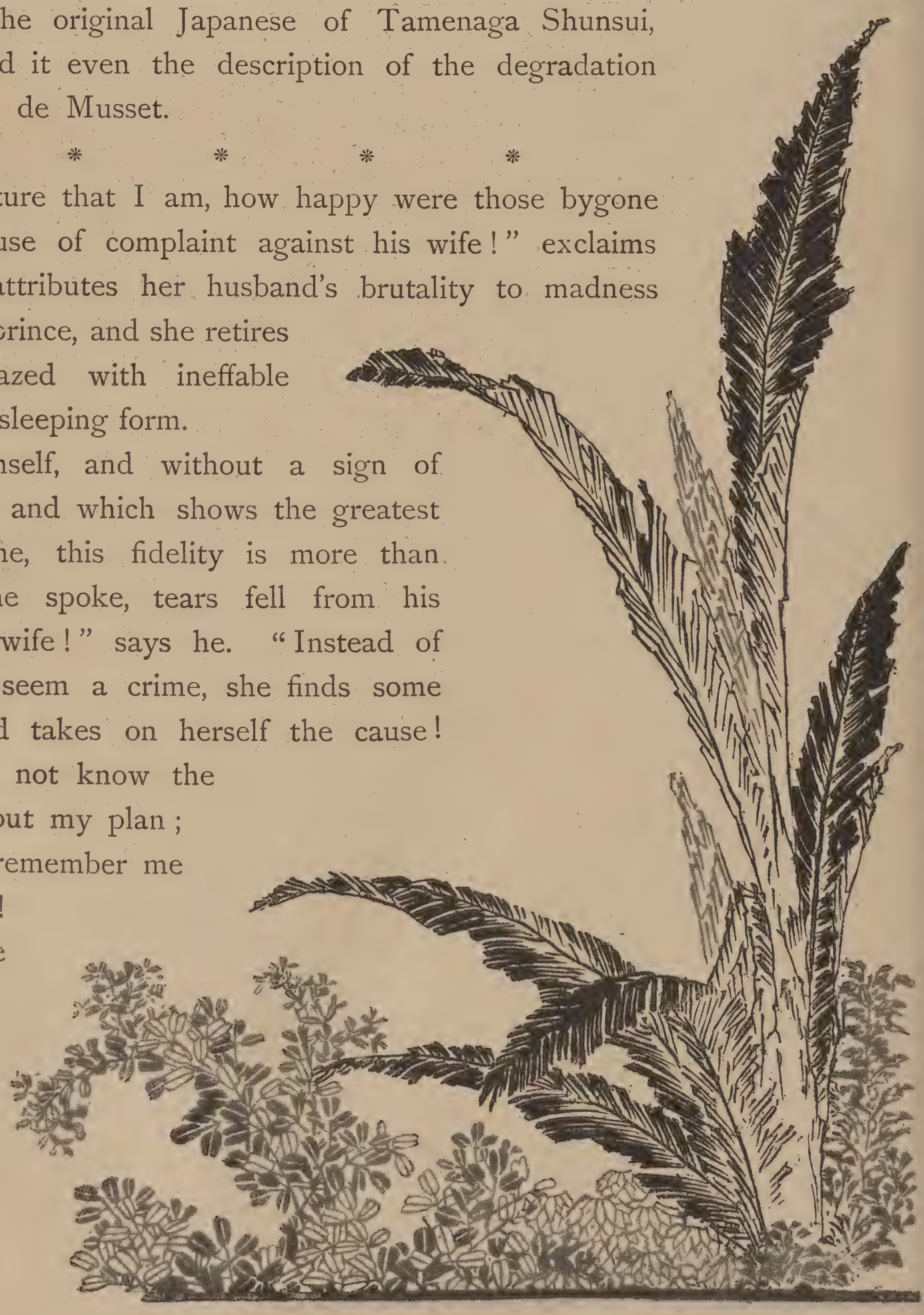
Kuranosuké was also equally successful in deceiving Kotsuké. He imitated drunkenness with such exactness that a man from Satsuma, finding him lying stretched out in a stream close by a tea-house and believing him to be hopelessly drunk, spoke to him thus—"Poor wretch, unworthy of the name of Samurai, who, instead of avenging thy master, givest thyself up to drunkenness and wantonness!" And then he pushed him over with his foot further into the stream.

The faithful servant carried his devotion still further. He apparently deeply wronged his wife, and, as it seemed, cruelly drove her from his house, only keeping his son aged sixteen with him. But one must read of this wondrous comedy in the original Japanese of Tamenaga Shunsui, which leaves very far behind it even the description of the degradation of Lorenzacchio from Alfred de Musset.

* * * * * *

"Alas, unfortunate creature that I am, how happy were those bygone days when there was no cause of complaint against his wife!" exclaims the unhappy woman, who attributes her husband's brutality to madness caused by the death of the prince, and she retires sobbing wildly, having gazed with ineffable sweetness on the apparently sleeping form.

Kuranosuké raises himself, and without a sign of drunkenness in his manner, and which shows the greatest emotion, cries—"Woe is me, this fidelity is more than I can bear!" And, as he spoke, tears fell from his eyes. "Here is a model wife!" says he. "Instead of reviling me for what must seem a crime, she finds some excuse for my conduct, and takes on herself the cause! This must cease. She shall not know the part I must play to carry out my plan; my little children shall not remember me only as a drunken old man! I shall return her whence she came. And yet, how can I do this?"



One of the forty-seven Ronins, by Kuniyoshi.

The brave man paced his room, and in the agony of his grief he wrung his hands and ground his teeth. Full of wisdom as he was, he had forgotten, when undertaking the part of a drunkard, that he would be unable to tire the devotion of his wife. His only means were to give her a letter of divorce and to send her back with his younger children to her father, who he knew would doubtless understand the real reason which caused him to act so, and who would console the poor woman and give her advice.

At this moment he heard his children's voices and then that of his wife, who was speaking in low tones.

"Hush, little ones—your father is ill—you will disturb him!"

"Is he still as he was the other day?" asked the eldest. "He had such a funny illness!"

"Your father has many troubles, and you must not speak so," is the mother's answer.

The unfortunate man turned his thoughts to his dead prince, and, arming himself with a heart of steel against all sentiment, he lay down again and pretended to sleep.

About mid-day his wife enters. She kneels close to him and waits till he opens his eyes, then she says—"Revered husband, thy bath is ready for thee."

He raises himself and takes a flute, which he commences to play, then he says quickly—"I am going."

He goes towards the door, and his wife at once fetches his 'Ronin's hat and gives it him kneeling.

"Revered husband, wear this," she says; "you have enemies around you here."

Kuranosuké turned towards her and said—"You talk too much; I shall

give you a letter of divorce and you will be obliged to return to your father. If you wish I shall give you the permission to take charge of our two youngest children. My servant will go with you."

Before she could answer he had put on his hat, and had staggered down the path; his wife saw him gradually disappearing, and it seemed to her as if she was waking from some dream.

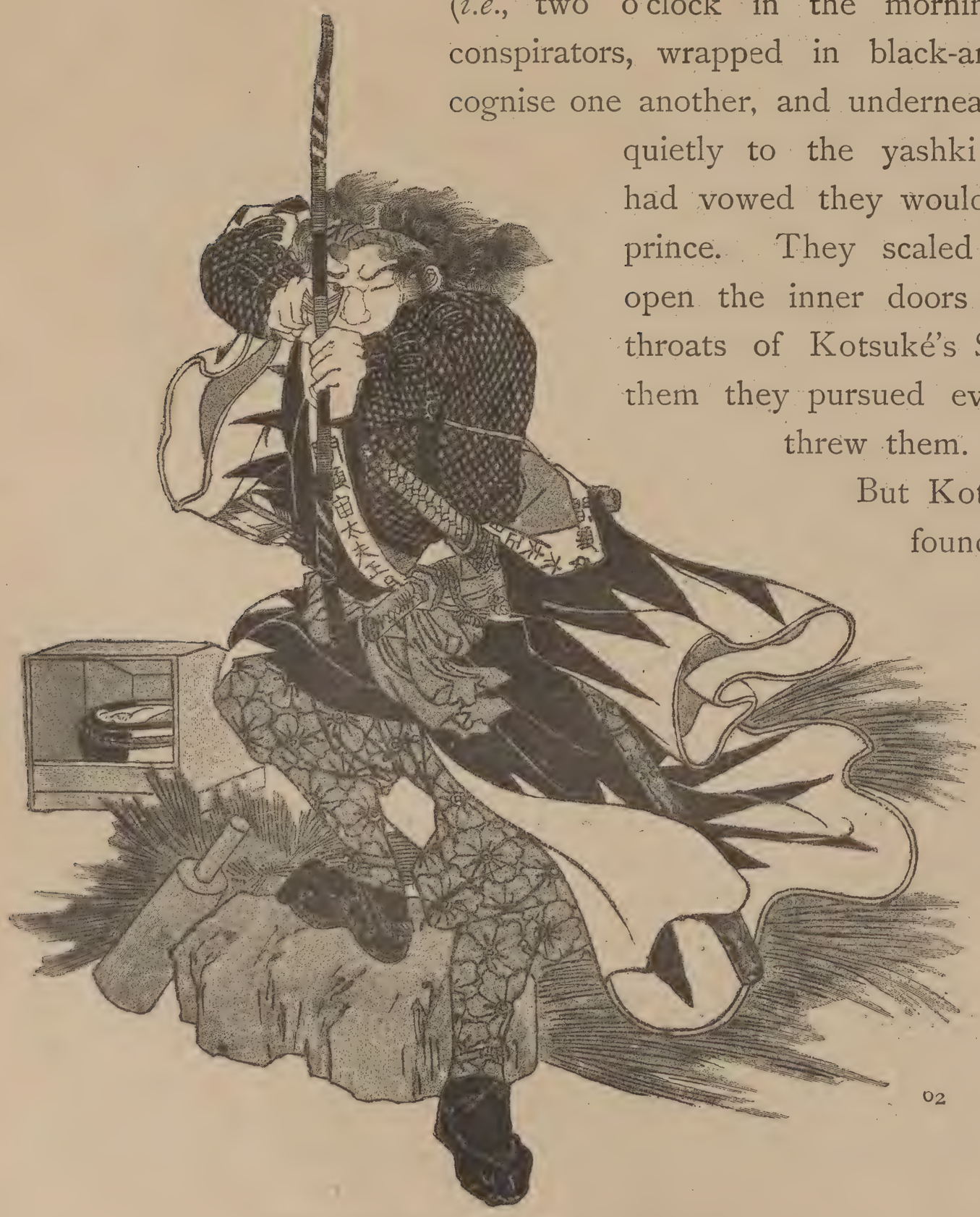
* * * * * *

Then it is that Kotsuké ("he who has committed a great crime hears, in the footstep of a mouse, the tread of an avenger")—then it is that Kotsuké, quite reassured by the degraded life of his enemy, discontinued having the watch which he had ordered around his house, and dismissed a portion of his guards.

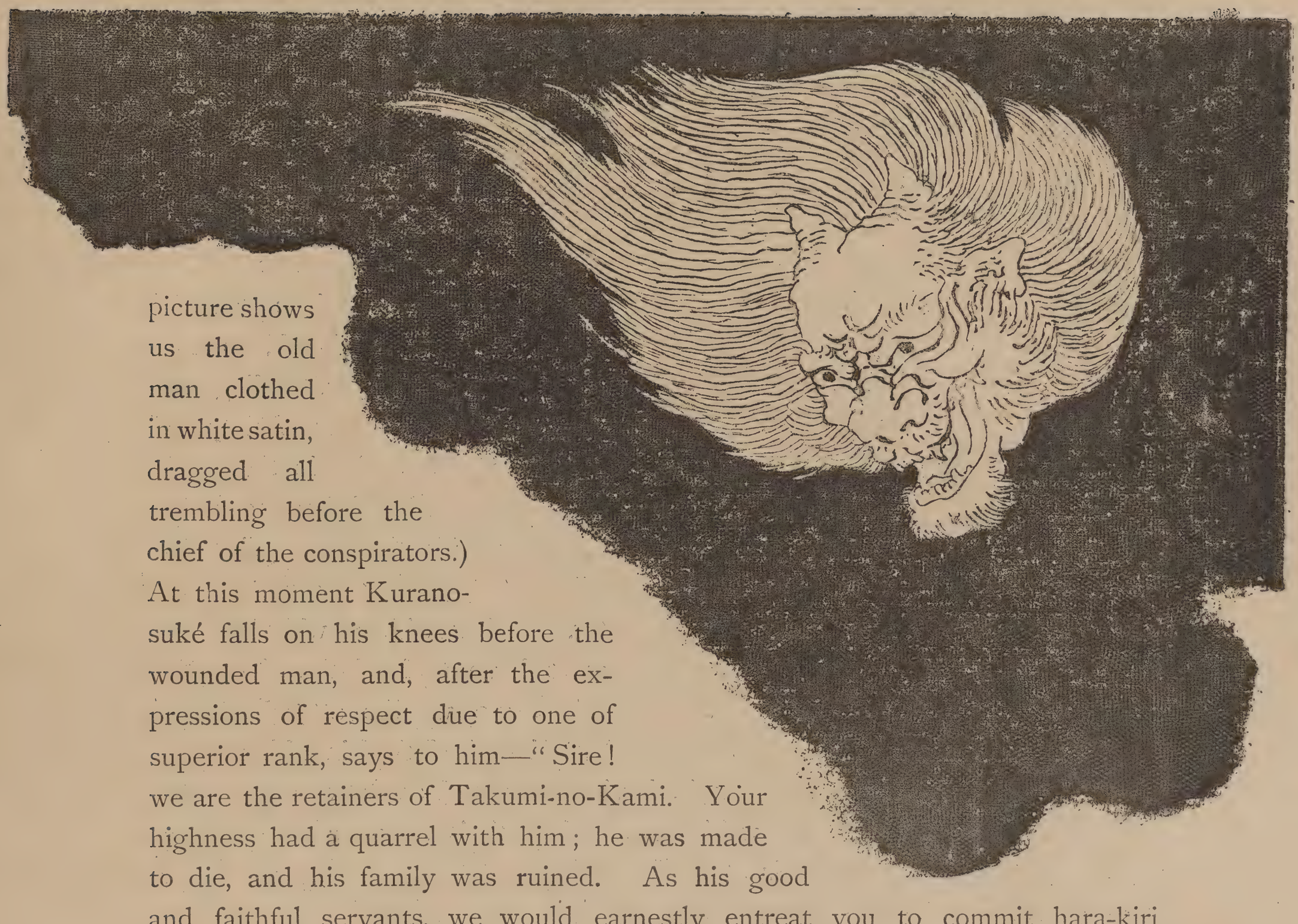
The night of vengeance had at last arrived, and here is its description, as taken from the pictures of an album:—

One cold winter's night, in December, 1701, at "the hour of the ox" (*i.e.*, two o'clock in the morning), in a heavy snowstorm, the conspirators, wrapped in black-and-white cloaks in order to recognise one another, and underneath coats of mail, made their way quietly to the yashki of the man whose head they had vowed they would place upon the tomb of their prince. They scaled the outer palisades and forced open the inner doors with a hammer. They cut the throats of Kotsuké's Samurais, and any who escaped them they pursued even on to the roof, whence they threw them.

But Kotsuké himself was nowhere to be found, and they despaired of ever finding him, until Kuranosuké, plunging his hands into his bed, found that the bed-clothes were still warm; he could not be far off therefore, and, after a careful search, his hiding-place was found—a chest for charcoal—with him, having already been wounded in his hip, concealed in it. (A coloured



Masé, one of the forty-seven Ronins, by Kuniyoshi.



picture shows us the old man clothed in white satin, dragged all trembling before the chief of the conspirators.) At this moment Kurano-suké falls on his knees before the wounded man, and, after the expressions of respect due to one of superior rank, says to him—"Sire! we are the retainers of Takumi-no-Kami. Your highness had a quarrel with him; he was made to die, and his family was ruined. As his good and faithful servants, we would earnestly entreat you to commit hara-kiri (disembowelling), and, having taken your grace's head, I will go and place it as an offering on the tomb of the noble Takumi. Kotsuké, not taking advantage of the invitation, Kuranosuké cut off his head with the little knife that had been used by his own master to disembowel himself.

Then the forty-seven Ronins hastened towards the temple on the "Hill of Spring," where rested the remains of the Prince of Akao beneath three layers of stone, surmounted by a tablet, on which was his epitaph as follows:—"The great Samurai rests here. He who enjoyed in life the noble titles of Major-domo-general and Great-lord-of-the-privilege-of-audience-with-the-Mikado." And, having made their offering of Kotsuké's head, they, counting themselves as dead men and beseeching the bonzes to bury them, gave themselves up to justice. Condemned by Hayashi Daigaku, Chief of the Academicians, who was consulted by the executive power, the forty-seven Ronins disembowelled themselves, and, buried around their lord, the grave of the Prince of Akao became a place of pilgrimage.

Such is the legendary history of these forty-seven men, one of whom

was the maker of the little writing-set. It is easy to understand, on hearing the translation of the inscription by M. Hayashi, how much interest I felt in an object which might even have played some part in the expedition against the house of Kotsuké—of which, by the way, I find no mention either in the romance of Tamenaga Shunsui, nor in the *Legends of Old Japan* by Mr. Mitford. It is natural that I should be anxious to make acquaintance with my artist-hero, either by a portrait, a sketch, or any representation; and I set to work to ransack my albums, finding the compilation which has for its title *Sei tû Guishi-deu* (the knights of duty and devotion), where the painter Kuniyoshi shows us the Ronins in the act of attacking the yashki of Kotsuké. One "carrying a bottle of dressing for wounds, and for making great flames to terrify the enemy," another carrying "two candles and two spikes of bamboo to act as torches," one putting out lamps with water, another with a whistle to his mouth, whose three shrill sounds must have told of the discovery of Kotsuké, and nearly every one in some warlike attitude, brandishing in both hands lances and swords, and each clothed in a blue robe, with his distinctive letter on it, having arms and accoutrements, and each carrying a yataté, a writing-set, and in their sleeve a paper explaining the reason for their attack.*

* This was a copy of the instructions drawn up by Kuranosuké, of which the original was still extant in the temple of the Hill of Spring (Singakuji), and which, among a mass of rules and regulations preparatory for the combat, contains this curious paragraph—"Before going take medicine; do so in order to keep well. Sudden emotion often makes even strong men ill."

Kotsuké discovered

Having shown the album to M. Hayashi, I asked him to pick out Otoka of the forty-seven Ronins represented, and whether he knew no further details of the man. While searching through the book, he said to me—"Here is Otoka, or rather Quengo Tadao—for it is not the custom to mention the real names of the Ronins—they are always represented by the feigned names by which they are known in the theatre." While saying this, M. Hayashi had turned to a page in the album where one finds a coloured print of a warrior in a blue helmet, with a black-and-white robe lined with black, his head bowed, his hands on the handle of a lance, one foot in the air, the other flat on the ground, and making a great blow from side to side. Then, as M. Hayashi cudgelled his memory for some biographical detail of Otoka, his eye rested on the half page of letterpress printed under the warrior, and he exclaimed, "His biography! Here it is!" and I give it just as he translated it from the text of *Ippitsu'an*.

"Tadao belonged by descent to a family of vassals of Akao. In spite of his youthfulness he was a well-known character; his knowledge of tactics and manœuvring brought him great

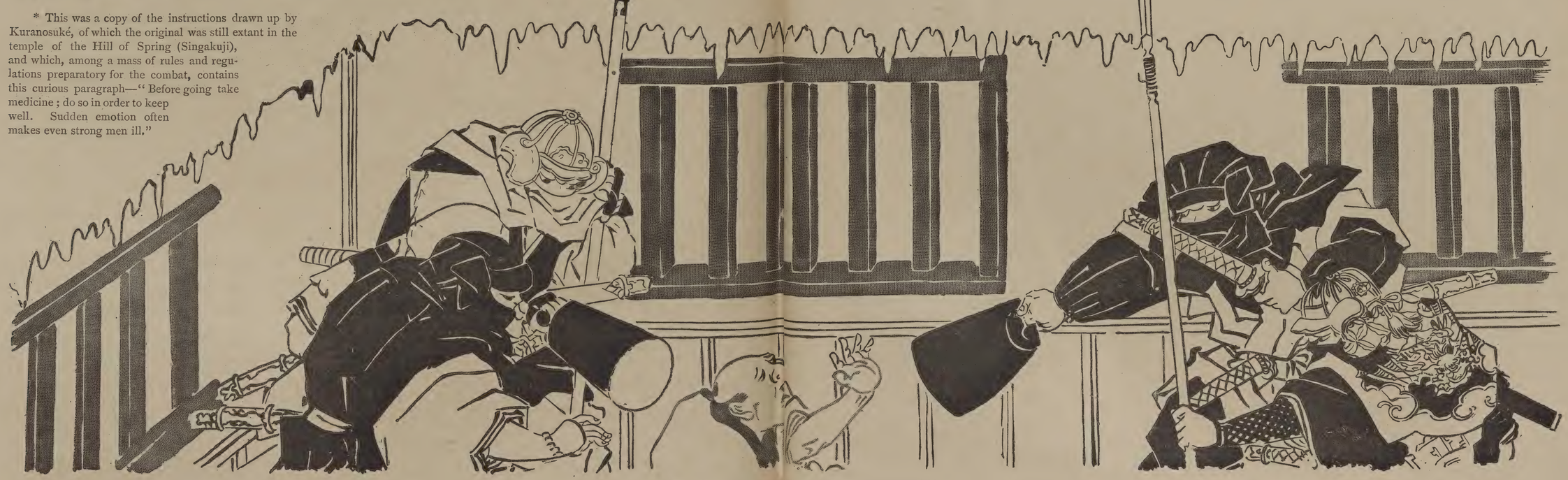
carrying lanterns, by Kunisada.

was the maker of the little writing-set. It is easy to understand, on hearing the translation of the inscription by M. Hayashi, how much interest I felt in an object which might even have played some part in the expedition against the house of Kotsuké—of which, by the way, I find no mention either in the romance of Tamenaga Shunsui, nor in the *Legends of Old Japan* by Mr. Mitford. It is natural that I should be anxious to make acquaintance with my artist-hero, either by a portrait, a sketch, or any representation; and I set to work to ransack my albums, finding the compilation which has for its title *Sei tû Guishi-deu* (the knights of duty and devotion), where the painter Kuniyoshi shows us the Ronins in the act of attacking the yashki of Kotsuké. One "carrying a bottle of dressing for wounds, and for making great flames to terrify the enemy," another carrying "two candles and two spikes of bamboo to act as torches," one putting out lamps with water, another with a whistle to his mouth, whose three shrill sounds must have told of the discovery of Kotsuké, and nearly every one in some warlike attitude, brandishing in both hands lances and swords, and each clothed in a blue robe, with his distinctive letter on it, having arms and accoutrements, and each carrying a yataté, a writing-set, and in their sleeve a paper explaining the reason for their attack.*

* This was a copy of the instructions drawn up by Kuranosuké, of which the original was still extant in the temple of the Hill of Spring (Singakuji), and which, among a mass of rules and regulations preparatory for the combat, contains this curious paragraph—"Before going take medicine; do so in order to keep well. Sudden emotion often makes even strong men ill."

Having shown the album to M. Hayashi, I asked him to pick out Otoka of the forty-seven Ronins represented, and whether he knew no further details of the man. While searching through the book, he said to me—"Here is Otoka, or rather Quengo Tadao—for it is not the custom to mention the real names of the Ronins—they are always represented by the feigned names by which they are known in the theatre." While saying this, M. Hayashi had turned to a page in the album where one finds a coloured print of a warrior in a blue helmet, with a black-and-white robe lined with black, his head bowed, his hands on the handle of a lance, one foot in the air, the other flat on the ground, and making a great blow from side to side. Then, as M. Hayashi cudgelled his memory for some biographical detail of Otoka, his eye rested on the half page of letterpress printed under the warrior, and he exclaimed, "His biography! Here it is!" and I give it just as he translated it from the text of *Ippitsu'an.*

"Tadao belonged by descent to a family of vassals of Akao. In spite of his youthfulness he was a well-known character; his knowledge of tactics and manœuvring brought him great



Kotsuké discovered by the ..., carrying lanterns, by Kunisada.

renown. After the disaster that befell the house of his master he came to Yeddo, determined in his heart to have vengeance. But to the world he appeared as an artist, and he was called among poets Shiyo, and a great poet of this period, Kikaku, was his friend. He was admitted to the tea-society of Tcha-noyu, and was pupil of Yamada Sohen, the celebrated master of tea-ceremonies, who was intimate with Kira (Kotsuké).

He so contrived to put himself into possession of the knowledge of the habits of his enemy. In order to become perfectly acquainted, he disguised himself as a merchant of articles made in bamboo and of brooms, of which he sold the finest sort; so he constantly visited the palace of Kira. So it was that he learnt that the fourteenth day of the twelfth month was the day of general cleaning, and that on this day all the people in the palace were either drunk, or asleep from fatigue. So it was, also, that he showed Oïshi which was the night that an attack should be made. In the combat he was wounded during the night, and it is believed that

Kobayoshi Heihate was his adversary." One remarks the words "disguised himself as a merchant of articles of bamboo;" he must have made them himself, as is proved by the little portable writing-set in my collection.

EDMOND DE GONCOURT.

Tokuda, one of the forty-seven Ronins, by Kuniyoshi.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

The story of the forty-seven Ronins is represented, beside the engravings in the text, by plates HI and IJ, in colours, from the brush of Hiroshigé, one of whose works—a landscape—we reproduced in No. 1.

Plates HI and IJ are from a set of eleven engravings representing as many scenes in the history of the Ronins. In plate HI the conspirators reach at the break of day the point of attack, they pass a bridge covered with snow, while two of their party, recognized from their black-and-white cloaks, wait for them in a boat which is to carry them over to one of the least-guarded points of Kotsuké's palace.

Plate IJ shows us Kotsuké seized in the Gardens of Yashki, whither he has tried to escape. In the background the faithful followers continue the combat with the palace guards.

Plate DA is a reproduction of a hand-screen in bronze of a light patina of a recent date, and which can hardly ever have been used to cool the face of any Japanese, for it weighs nearly four pounds. The plate shows it three quarters smaller than its real size.

It is formed of two plates so cleverly fastened together at the edges that no joining is visible. Nevertheless, the two pieces of bronze represent in a wonderful manner the two leaves, which in ordinary fans are glued on separate pieces split from the bamboo, which forms also the handle; and even the cleverest of our European workmen would find it hard to say what means can have been employed to divide the bronze cylinder which is held in the hand; how the sticks of the fan are cut, and how their ends are fixed between the two plates.

The artist, whose name is Ko-un, has displayed a marvellous method of working the metal into a novel form, but it would be difficult to find any practical use for the screen. Fastened against one of the wooden partitions of a house, its patina would form a charming point of colour, contrasting pleasantly with the scheme of decoration, and if some newly-arrived visitor were to notice it, the host could not fail to be gratified by the admiration it would cause. The figure chased in relief on it, and afterwards cleverly touched up with some

sharp implement, represents a mendicant priest, tired out by constantly beating a drum in order to draw the attention of charitable passers-by.

Plate BD represents the mask of a Nô dancer (see the notes in No. 2 on the tenth plate in No. 1), in lacquered wood, making a grinning grimace, and showing two rows of teeth. From time to time plates will be given representing these masks. They lend important aid in establishing this important fact in Japanese Art—that beauty is not always in regular lines and forms, but also, and very decidedly so, in the strength of the rendering of the inner life, and the expression of character. With us, many people are apt to be scornful when one dares to call these objects beautiful; but there is a great contrast between the taste for Japanese Art and that of the general public.

It is always worth while remarking that, however exaggerated the features may be, there is always a well-executed cast of the human face in these masks; and even those which are hideous and grotesque would serve a physiognomist perfectly in the study of the distinctive characteristics of the race.

In Plate BA there are various decorative designs of the most simple description. The border of clematis flowers is from a page by Hokusai.

The stencil pattern in two tones consists of the nibbled leaves of the *Potamogeton fluitans*, which grows, as its name indicates, in low and damp spots where the abundance of snails causes the cuts which divide nearly every leaf.

The artist has even been so bold as to reproduce the plant as it is most commonly seen, and he has had the double satisfaction of being true to nature, and at the same time, from a decorative point of view, he has produced a design both novel and original, which pleases the eye and is not the least monotonous. In this direction the Japanese artist considers he cannot go too far.

The series of decorative motives in this number is completed by Plate FC, which is a very simple arrangement of a few fans carelessly thrown down on a trellis-work ground, which is already strewn with some dead rose-leaves. The fans themselves present various geometrical designs, and a pattern of birds flying among branches.

Plate GA is composed of two portions, taken from Hokusai's *Sogona*—a source from which we have already drawn specimens.

We here again find expressed in quiet colouring the same ingenuity and the same love of flowers and small animals which we have already so constantly remarked.

On a gray ground the great artist has drawn chrysanthemums and the double-pink, whose loose petals and bending leaves he loves even more than the bright-coloured rose.

At the top of the bunch are chrysanthemums, while below, the modest pink blooms, but with double the five petals which are the sign of its kind. Two bees, in their striped armour and with their great eyes, most truthfully drawn, give life to this tiny piece of nature.

The second portion is more full of movement—one might almost say more lively. The

broad treatment of Hokusai is more especially to be noticed in his studies of birds; broadly expressed and well-sustained, his execution shows no slightness, and demands, in order to avoid heaviness, all the care of the great artist.

Plate FA is a study of irises, from an unsigned water-colour drawing, but most probably dating from the eighteenth century. The artist, having endeavoured to give the suppleness of the flower in the simplest manner, has been obliged to neglect the details of the structure, but he has taken care to reproduce the tiniest ribs.

Plate IA shows a specimen of Ceramic art, from the hands of the celebrated Kensan (1663–1743), who worked first at Kyōto, and then at Yeddo, where he founded the manufactory of Imado, which exists to the present day. Kensan endued the many works from his hand with a strong originality, not only by the use of quite novel materials, but also by ornamentation of bold and strong designs very different to the thin work of his predecessors in his art.

The vase represented in Plate IA forms part of a Japanese dinner service—it is the "donbri," in which are served cooked fruits, and sometimes fish. It is in earthenware, covered with green enamel strewn over with blossoms; the upper part is open-work.

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SEPARATE PLATES.

HI. **Scene from the History of the Forty-seven Ronins.** By Hiroshigé.

DA. **Bronze Hand-Screen.** By Ko-un.

IA. **Specimen of Ceramic Art.** By Kensan.

FA. **Study of Irises.**

IJ. **Second Scene from the History of the Forty-seven Ronins.** By Hiroshigé.

FC. **Decorative Design.**

CA. **Flowers, Insects, and Birds.** By Hokusai.

BD. **Mask of a Nô Dancer.**

BA. **Model Industrial Design.**
Leaves and Flowers (in stencil).

The Text of Part VII. will be by M. Théodore Duret ("Engraving in Japan").

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BD

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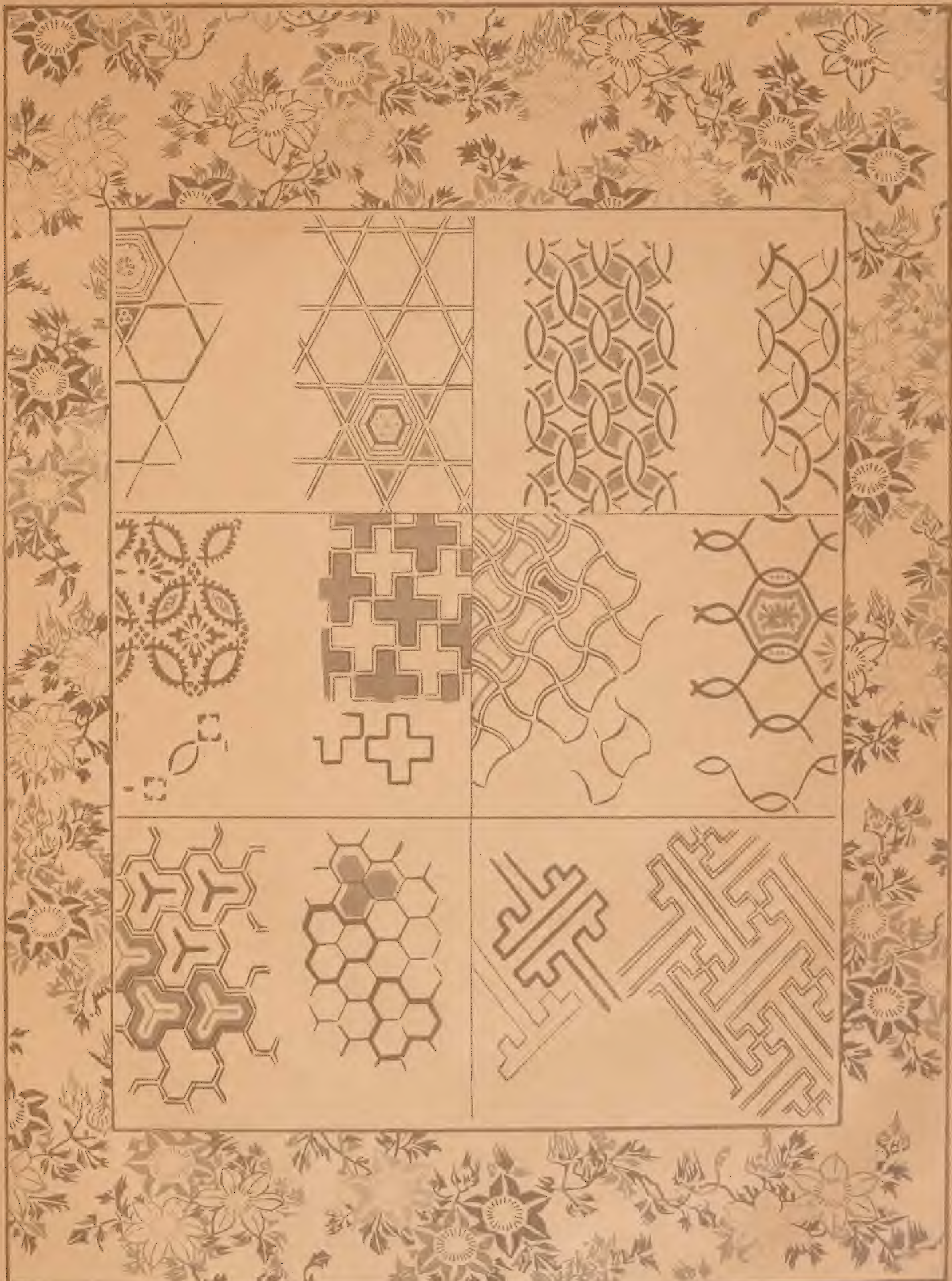

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